

messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 37 – Number 1

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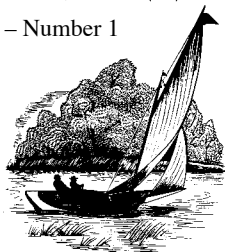
**Highlight Features
in This Issue**
40th Annual Snow Row - Cobb Island Voyages
Among the Islands - Tidings' Great Adventure
Sailing Adventures - The Making of a Party Canoe
Trifoam 16 Build - Learning to Love Lofting



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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

Here we go into our 37th year, over 700 issues now (I didn't go back for an exact count). The question increasingly arises, "when will it all end?" Well, it's not obvious to me yet. Last fall when I had that surprise heart attack after 89 years of freedom from such bothers, it could have signaled the end of my long, long lifetime of editing and publishing my own magazines (now just 60 years and counting, interrupted only briefly in change of titles and subject in 1983 when *MAIB* was launched). But it didn't, for the aftermath found me with an undamaged heart so I had no excuse to give it up. Don't want to anyway, 90 lays seven months ahead, be fun to reach that milestone and look ahead then into another decade of enjoying life and work.

Another question that has arisen concerns progress on my Old Town Rowboat project, which I announced early in 2018. The answer is there has not been much. It is intended to be one to be enjoyed working on with no deadline for launching and has proven to be true to that intent. Like not much has been done. Spring and summer came on soon after undertaking it so nothing got done during what I think of as my outdoor months. Then winter shop time was delayed by that September heart attack and subsequent catch up effort on everything around here put off for a while at that time.

But some progress has been made. All the exterior trim and rotten canvas is off. I have scraped all the old interior varnish from the front half of the hull. The rear half is holding the hull shape with all the interior stuff removed from the front. I can see the condition of all the ribs and planking and it is good, just a couple of broken pieces of planking to replace. Many of the bottom planks were loose as their fasteners had given up so it was "down to brass tacks" for me, I bought a pound of these from Steve at nearby Ste-

vens Canoe Shop (he contributes the periodic Norumbega Chapter WCHA news on our pages) and have been banging them in where needed frame to frame.

But now as I write this, the end of March, outdoor season is at hand and so there'll not be much further progress until late fall I suspect. A major factor in this is my interest and participation in other activities besides small boats.

I do expect to resume kayaking with friend Charlie on area flat water rivers and marshes and also riding my recumbent trike along with him on his former handcycle trike, which we have been converting this winter to electric as his shoulders are giving out after 40 years of wheelchair driving (it's affecting his paddling also and we may have to go to an electric outboard on his kayak, we'll see).

I also trike weekly with another friend, usually a 25-40 mile weekday ride on back roads when we pretty much have these roads to ourselves. And then there are the weekend (weather permitting) motorcycle rides with another group of friends on back roads (mostly dirt) in nearby southern New Hampshire, western Maine and southern Vermont. These are limited to weekends because most of these guys are in their 60s and still gainfully employed.

And then, of course, there are the tasks involved in property maintenance and repair, mainly spring and fall yard cleanup, mowing, trimming and fixing stuff that has reached condition really needing it. These all take last place in the pecking order of daily life here. My main time consumer is putting together this monthly magazine. I don't keep record of time spent but it is about three to four days a week spread over each month. I guess this can be considered a job (work) as it has to come out regularly, but it is still an enjoyable way to pass my time here when not out somewhere playing.

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On the Cover...

It was something of a tossup this issue for me as to which one of Richard Honans' "Getting to the Snow Row" photos to feature, I finally decided on the real one on the cover. The other at right was a bit more contrived, albeit quite a scenario to contemplate, especially for friend Dave and his Tiki Hut gang in Florida, land of perpetual (boring!) sunshine.

The Snow Row story, including originator and long time organizer Ed McCabe's explanation of why the event has reverted to just oar on gunwale rowboats only, is on pages 6 and 7.





Harking Back With Harvey

*"Small craft images from today as viewed through a long ago lens."
 Images by Harvey Petersiel
 Tide's Out!*





You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

Inspired by Manry

Minimalists, sailors, those who have taken the road less traveled, close to 100 of us, took in a 90 minute documentary recently at a local theater here near San Francisco. I had wondered what had become of the Super 8 film Robert Manry shot preparing and sailing his 13½' sloop *Tinkerbelle* across the Atlantic in the summer of '65. Well, it was saved by director Steve Wystach and used to create this excellent film with contemporary interviews of people close to Manry, who died in 1971.

It was especially lovely to see Manry's two children, now middle aged adults, commenting on their early lives and on the events accompanying Manry's 78 day passage, and to see newscaster Bill Jorgensen, rival to Manry's employer, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, who scooped the paper on TV. The portrait of this media combat brought forth laughter from our audience.

Manry's reception on arrival in Falmouth, England, was stupendous. Twenty thousand people massed along the cliffs, clogged the lanes and mounted anything that gave them a better view of *Tinkerbelle* as she arrived accompanied by a fleet of yachts, commercial vessels and aircraft.

I've long been inspired by Manry's account of his Atlantic crossing. I've been to the museum in Cleveland to see his boat and its replica. *Tinkerbelle* is, among small craft books, real literature. His crossing was well planned. The film revealed that Manry's "plan" to sail the Atlantic with a friend on a larger boat was simply a diversion to placate the fears of friends and family.

Film editor Steve Armstrong spoke and answered questions following the film. I hope to purchase a copy on DVD when available.

Derek Van Loan, Mill Valley, CA

Editor Comments: To learn more about this video (as yet unavailable to the public) google The Robert Manry Project.

Derek's more modest *Ocean Explorer* under sail.



Adventures & Experiences...

Creatures I'm Lucky to See

These creatures are ones I'm lucky to see when rowing on the St Johns River about 20 miles NW of St Augustine. Never a dull moment.

Bob Cole, St. Augustine, FL



Information of Interest...

I particularly enjoyed reading Richard Honan's series "Building a 13' Peapod" in recent issues as it reminded me of what used to be a long standing tradition here in the Tidewater Region of Virginia. It used to be common for a kid to have a boat, typically a flat bottomed skiff, instead of a bike. In the 1940s and '50s there were not a lot of paved roads in rural areas so a boat was more useful if one lived not too far from the water. It was common for a boat to be built by a father or grandfather for their child or grandchild. Possibly in some cases the child or grandchild helped in the construction.

At our Waterman's Museum we received and restored a flat bottom skiff that a boy of eight years received from his grandfather in the 1940s. The "boy" is now in his 80s and from time to time we put the boat in the water and take turns rowing it in the York River.

I was very interested in the reproduction of the painting "Starting Out After Rail" by Thomas Eakins that Honan included in one of his articles. Eakins is a great favorite of mine because he was one of the few artists who did works devoted to various maritime activities, sailing, rowing, hunting from boats and fishing along the Delaware, but he was not considered a maritime artist. He also portrayed other sports, baseball, boxing and wrestling. His major works were devoted to other subjects, however.

In "Starting Out After Rail" the individuals in the boat are actually the artist and his

father and the boat is thought to be a version of the Delaware Ducker which was very popular in the Philadelphia area in the late 1800s. Rail birds were popular birds to hunt in the New Jersey marshes along the Delaware and in the boat one can see a shotgun and push pole.

Readers who are interested in seeing Eakins' works should access the Wikipedia website and key in Thomas Eakins as a subject. There are links to his paintings.

Jay Nachod, Newport News, VA



Projects...

Still Working

I'm glad to hear that you are doing well after your attack. We are an aging group lucky enough to keep going. I'm still working at my business, tool making, still enjoying it. I have lots of hobbies so I keep working to support them, boating, boat building, vintage observed trials, black powder rifles, woodworking and their related interests. Take care and best wishes for 2019.

Dick Oliver, Towanda, PA

This Magazine...

Loved the Tale of the Beale

Loved the tale of the *Beale* in the March issue, reminded me of our much more modest 2004 late November passage with a much smaller sinking schooner and the good old days of soaking up same with three bilge pumps.

Susan Gately, Sterling, NY



Small Boats, Big Fun at CBMM

Small boats and big fun are in store for all ages as the Model Guild of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and the Washington Ship Model Society host the 13th Maritime Model Expo on May 18 and 19 at CBMM. In addition to numerous indoor and outdoor maritime exhibitions, the Maritime Model Expo offers pond demonstrations, model races, special exhibits, family activities, food and more.

During the expo children will have the opportunity to build, paint, decorate and then sail their own small model in a small pool. For \$3 they can select and build a sailboat or rubber band powerboat, assisted by a CBMM Model Guild member.



Radio controlled (RC) modelers will be sailing model boats in a large temporary pond located on Fogg's Landing during both days of the Expo. These include steam powered models, electric models, sailboats and self steered pond models. At the same time, various boat models will be on exhibit in the Van Lennep Auditorium. Members of the Washington Ship Model Society as well as other acclaimed modelers will bring many of their highly details models of the show.



At 11am on Sunday, CBMM's Model Sailing Club will hold a regatta for its sailing skipjacks on Fogg's Cove. Afterwards guests will be invited to sail a variety of large model sailing craft under the guidance of Sailing Club members.



On Sunday the Maritime Model Expo will be combined with CBMM's Community Day, open to the public, free of charge. For more information about the 2019 Maritime Model Expo contact Gary Nylander at gnylander@atlanticbb.net. For more information about CBMM's festivals, visit bit.ly/chesapeakefestivals or call (410) 745-2916.

CBMM Brightwork Workshop

On May 11, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum will host a Brightwork Workshop in its boat shop. Advanced registration is required. Organized through CBMM's Apprentice for a Day Shipyard Programs, this workshop invites guests to learn the art of finishing from Shipyard Programs Manager Jennifer Kuhn. Participants will get hands on experience learning how to strip old paint and varnish, how to properly prepare surfaces while addressing any problem areas and how to apply new varnish and/or paint to those surfaces.

The cost for the Brightwork Workshop is \$60 with a 20% discount for CBMM members. To register, or for more information, visit cbmm.org/brightwork. To find a full list of CBMM's upcoming Shipyard Programs, visit cbmm.org/shipyardprograms.



Learn to Make Rope Fenders

CBMM is planning a workshop this spring to teach creating decorative rope fenders. Advanced registration is required for this program which is scheduled for 10am-4pm Saturday, May 25. Participants are invited to join Pete Peters and CBMM's Shipyard Programs Manager Jennifer Kuhn in the Boatshop where they will gain a working knowledge of how to fashion rope fenders and leave with their own creation. Peters is an avid sailor and active member of the Traditional Small Craft Association. He's previously led programs on making rope fenders at the Wooden Boat Festival at Mystic Seaport Museum and at CBMM's annual Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival.

Materials and basic tools are included in the \$75 registration fee. A 20% discount is available for CBMM members. To register, or for more information, visit cbmm.org/ropefenders.



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Well, the 40th Annual Hull (Massachusetts) Snow Row is now history. It was a beautiful day on March 9 with bright sunny skies, temps in the low 40s and light breezes that made for a great day on the water. My nephew Matthew and I, along with my brother Steve, drove from Winthrop the 30 miles down to the Hull Lifesaving Museum where we unloaded our boat and slid it across 12" of snow down to the water's edge. We were greeted by almost 50 other boats ranging in size from 12' peapods up to 30' gigs with their six man crews. It was great to stand on the beach and look over the harbor and see old friends. We greeted each other, exchanged rowing stories of terrible weather conditions, boats sinking and where we first met.

This was our tenth time rowing in the Hull Snow Row, named for Winthrop's own Edward Rowe Snow, a teacher and historian of Boston Harbor. The Snow Row consists of a three and a half mile rowing race around Hingham Harbor. This was our first year that we didn't transport our *William & Anthony* on the back of a lobster boat from Winthrop, cruising four miles through Boston Harbor to Hull. We would have been aboard our good friend Larry Bradley's lobster boat, the *Sandy B*. After dropping my boat off, Larry would be one of the safety patrol boats for the race. Sadly, Larry suffered a heart attack while tending his traps and passed away three years ago. Cruising down through Boston Harbor from Winthrop to Hull aboard the *Sandy B*, made the day extra special. Larry's friendship and personality are surely missed.

Previous years gave us conditions with bitter cold temperatures, snow squalls, biting winds and large ice flows. This year brought perfect conditions, calm seas and mild temperatures. The most noticeable thing missing was that stiff, cold northwest wind. Nothing worse than try to get across Hull Gut with an incoming tide and a stiff 25 knot wind in our face.

My nephew Matthew and I had a special mascot aboard the *William & Anthony*



The 40th Annual Snow Row

By Richard Honan

for today's race. Nero was a Belgian Malinois police dog and a canine partner of Yarmouth police officer Sean Gannon. Sean Gannon was killed last April in the line of duty. Nero was also shot and has recovered. My friend Hilary Moll asked if Nero could ride in the *William & Anthony* for the race. We were honored to have him aboard our boat.

The race went off exactly at 12 noon. Matthew and I got off to a messy start, but within a few minutes we got our rowing

rhythm and whizzed by most of the fleet (actually they whizzed by us). We headed out to our first turning point, Sheep Island, a small spit of land about one and a half miles from the Point Allerton Coast Guard Base. From Sheep Island we headed north for approximately one mile to the day marker off of Peddocks Island. From there, we rowed the last mile past Fort Andrews on Peddocks Island to the finish line.

We pulled the *William & Anthony* up on the beach, then up to the snow and dragged the boat across the snow to the truck where we loaded her up and tied her down. From there it was over to the old Coast Guard building where we enjoyed the great hospitality of the Hull Lifesaving Museum. Every type of stew, chowder, soup, broth was available along with a variety of breads, rolls, bagels, sandwiches, fresh fruit and deserts. It was an incredible spread. Many thanks to the members of the Hull Lifesaving Museum for organizing another great event.



On March 9 it was the 40th time that rowers have lined up on the beach at Windmill Point in Hull, Massachusetts, for the famous Le Mans start and the 3 1/3 mile transit of the southern harbor. Four decades ago, (what were you doing 40 years ago?) four boats lined up and tried the whole idea on for size. Much of the premise was that Joshua James and the lifesaving surfmen of Hull did their best work in the winter months, not the lovely zephyrs of August, and so it stood to reason that if we intended to walk in their footprints (or their puddles) we also had to find our way out into the bay in whatever the weather gods dished up for us at that time of year to test ourselves and our boats.

As the sport of open water rowing evolved, the Hull Lifesaving Museum did its best to keep pace and included the panoply of winter athletes in the event. Some came intent on crushing the field, most came intent on joining the intrepid club of rowers who have withstood the Snow Row, many wondering midway through, "Whatever possessed me to do this to myself?" That internal conversation always was replaced by endorphin soaked euphoria when we finally crossed the finish line and headed for the soup line.

Medals painted on surf clams and Snow Row hats have traveled up and down the East Coast and across the Atlantic. Hull and Boston rowers frequently bump into strangers who, spotting the hats and finding out who we are, want to relive the squally day in 1982 or the famous "No Row" of 1986. Children of old Snow Rowers frequently show up to give it a try and put parents' bragging to rest. The first time a Snow Row grandchild shows, I for one



"Roots Row" 40th Snow Row

By Ed McCabe

This year was fixed seat traditional rowing boats only!

will have to ponder staying ashore, no that's probably not true. Incidentally, the name in fact, pays homage to the late, great maritime historian Edward Rowe Snow, our Flying Santa.

All this being said, the question arose, "Why are the paddlers and sliders being bumped from this year's race and does this mean it will always be so?" Please explain.

For most participants, taking part in the race involved digging boats out of the snow, cranking in a few practices and a couple of hours on the ergometer and then loading up and heading to the beach in Hull. For the people who run the Maritime Program and the Safety Committee of the museum, the event is very different. We picked the date four months in advance, the ultimate crap shoot.

We began watching weather trends in January, gawked at wind websites in mid February and argued over odds of northwest winds in the days leading up to the Saturday event. We scoured Boston Harbor for anyone whose boat was still in the water to act as chase boats and created teams to walk the beach vetting boats and, of course, making calls on their owners. When all this is done most of us would have to switch gears and hop in a boat and become an athlete for 34 minutes or so.

For the last two years the Aeolian gods have dished up two sobering weather systems. Last year we decided to eliminate all but the most suitable hulls at the last minute and eschewed the Le Mans start for a rolling start on an abbreviated two nautical mile course in the lee of Peddocks Island. This left a not insignificant number of paddling and sliding seat friends high and dry and quite disgruntled after making the trip. As the one who had to hold a number of ad hoc beach conferences, I can only say the decision and the timing was fun for no one.

So there it is, we fell back to deep water boats, experienced crews, skilled coxswains all with the ability to weather what the Snow Row has to offer. We recognized that within the paddling and sliding seat community there were many with just those attributes, but the museum has chosen to focus on the founding principles and core values of Hull's historic lifesavers and the early Snow Row participants. Henceforth the Snow Row will be a celebration of traditional boats and traditional mariners and the legacy of the Lifesavers of Hull.



About Us

The Hull Lifesaving Museum is so much more than a museum. Founded in 1978, we are an essential part of the community that for 40 years has provided not only crucial lessons from our maritime heritage, but also life changing and sometimes life saving youth development experiences. Our mission celebrates the lifesaving spirit of Skills, Courage and Caring and the relevance of our history to our constituents' daily lives. HLM challenges its participants to draw the best from themselves by combining experiential education with historical preservation and interpretation.

HLM's year round education and recreation programs, serving a diverse constituency, 75% of whom are underserved youth



from metropolitan Boston, are broadly recognized as best practice models. HLM's program design respects the needs, expectations, and skill level of each participant.

Mission

The driving principles of the 19th century coastal lifesavers, Skills, Courage and Caring, are the foundations of the Hull Lifesaving Museum's commitment to impact individual lives for the better. We foster a community dedicated to the preservation of Boston Harbor's rich maritime heritage and lifesaving traditions through exhibits, collections, open water rowing programs and stewardship of our historic sites.



History

The Hull Lifesaving Museum (HLM) is housed in the former Point Allerton US Lifesaving Station opened in 1889 under the leadership of Joshua James who, with his crews of the Massachusetts Humane Society and US Lifesaving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service, were merged to form the US Coast Guard. Joshua James is considered a "father" of the US Coast Guard.

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Some of my earliest memories are of the view to the stern of our 21' Barbour as the comely wooden boat was driven through the greenish brown water of the Chesapeake or one of its tributaries. The scene never failed to mesmerize me as a tike of three or four years old, what with the 25 horse Johnson outboard churning away, sounding and smelling like only a 1950s or '60s era two stroke outboard can. The wake of the boat delighted me with its ever changing frothy turbulence streaming astern, fleeting rainbows shimmering in the spray. I know I often fell asleep to the rise and fall of the boat as it nudged and parted the waves. Some of those memories are from voyages to Cobb Island.

My ancestral home in Tidewater Virginia is on Locklies Creek, not far from where the Rappahannock River meets the Chesapeake Bay. As kids, my siblings and I were forever plying the waters close to home in all manner of small craft, primarily under the power of oar, paddle or sail but also under the motive spell of internal combustion. We had various motorboats, but the one which conjures up the most adventure early on is that Barbour, and aboard that spruce and mahogany craft is how we undertook our first of a series of voyages to Cobb Island.



Uninhabited Cobb is one in a chain of barrier islands forming the Atlantic coast of Virginia's eastern shore. The island is a few miles long and a half mile wide. Today it's part of a relatively vast and protected wilderness notable especially considering its position on the otherwise crowded eastern seaboard of the United States.

Getting to Cobb Island from our home port of Locklies Creek, regardless of conditions of weather and sea state, was always a substantial undertaking. Such was ensured not only by the distance and open water passage, weather and sea conditions but the navigational complexity involved. The small craft voyager must negotiate the vagaries of shifting shoals, unpredictable tidal currents and unmarked channels in the labyrinthine salt marshes of the eastern shore. All of these challenges, along with the fact that the island is so "out there" on the charts is, I guess, why my dad picked it as an expeditionary objective, genuine adventure was guaranteed.

Our father Fuller was, of course, the ring-leader and captain on these trips but there were also friends of his and the offspring of these guys who would join us on Cobb voyages. Before she wised up my mom even accompanied us on the earliest voyages to Cobb. A typical island voyage might encompass a crew complement of about seven persons, two responsible (?) adults and the rest kids.

Cobb Island Voyages

By John W. Robinson
jwrobinson77@gmail.com

Much preparation went into the Cobb trips. Boat readiness in terms of helpful modifications, maintenance, tools, spares and fuel, of course, but also camping gear and food, anything we might need yet intelligently planned and packed. The boat had a limit to space and weight of gear and crew carried of course, it was an art to bringing just what we should and no more.

Our first trips to Cobb Island in the late 1950s were aboard the 21' wooden Barbour, powered by that single 25hp Johnson Sea Horse. It's hard to imagine today cruising with so little power. In fact, it wasn't long before my dad doubled that capacity by adding another 25hp to the transom of the Barbour, not just to have more power but for the safety of redundancy. Also, Fuller modified the Barbour by, among many other things, creating an enclosed cabin where there had been none. This, of course, greatly added to the boat's capability as a camp cruiser. Us kids could hunker in there as we beat into the

trips was limited to one small village on the eastern shore, Oyster. Beyond that, extra fuel was carried in 5gal cans and gas transfer mid bay from those cans to the Johnson tanks was always tricky in the often rough conditions.

Later would come a big modification of the Barbour involving the replacement of the twin outboards with an early version of a propeller outdrive unit combined with a six cylinder automobile engine. Fuller carried out this project while the boat sat on its trailer in our driveway, the work spilling well beyond the autumn envisioned for it. Like I said, this conversion was an early rendition of the stern drive design idea and required lots of figuring and on the fly engineering and fabrication of parts.

One aspect that I have a hazy recollection of, remember, I was just a kid playing with Matchbox cars and stuff, involved how to cool the engine. A regular grill and radiator schema wouldn't work in this case, of course, so cooling water was routed through a pair of 1" diameter pipes affixed to the boat's bottom and running its length. By the way, this whole propulsion rig required almost continuous tinkering to keep it operational. Luckily my dad, possessing the mind of a mad scientist, was always up to the task.

We were equipped with a huge US Navy surplus compass, firmly attached to the bulkhead next to the helm. Otherwise we had the essential tools of the marine navigator, a selection of paper NOAA charts, dividers and parallel rules. And yes, we kids learned how to use these things. There were no electronics at all aboard our boat at first and the only addition later on was a basic radio.

Approaching the island was complex. The surf was too rough on the ocean side so landfall was made on the more protected inland side. The tidal range and flow was substantial and shifting shoals all added to making the approach thought provoking. I remember us poling the boat across shallow flats, the engine silenced and tilted, looking for water deep enough to again get under power. Finally at the island, we'd nose the boat into the beach at an indentation on the western shoreline and get a couple of anchors lined out and set. Later we might return from beachcombing on the ocean side to find the boat high and dry, completely out of her element. And the boat might remain that way until the next high tide.

One might wonder what there was to do on Cobb Island. As I said, it's an uninhabited barrier island, but at the time of our visits there were not one but two abandoned US Coast Guard stations. The newer one had been decommissioned just a few years before we started voyaging there in the late '50s, and the old station had been built in the 1870s. The latter was rapidly being reclaimed by Mother Nature. As you can imagine, both of these structures held limitless fascination for us visitors and hours were spent exploring in and around them. My favorite thing was climbing up to the very top lookout of the "new" Coast Guard station, the view stretching out not only across the vast expanse of marsh, creeks and bays to the west but the unlimited view over the island and the Atlantic beyond.

Yes, we were always busy on our visits to the island. Besides exploring the Coast Guard stations, we beachcombed on the rough Atlantic shore, finding all sorts of treasures including interesting dead sea life, dolphins, rays, sea turtles, birds, that we would

head seas that always seemed part of a Cobb Island trip.



Besides all of the other interesting challenges of such coastal voyaging there was ever the issue of fuel management. The Johnsons used plenty of gas and finding it on the Cobb

poke at with sticks of driftwood, discussing how they might have met their end. We'd find bottles from Europe, pieces of broken boats, fish net floats, lost aids to navigation, among other flotsam. Poking out of the sand at low tide we'd find the skeletal remains of several wrecked wooden ships and such was always the subject of excited conjecture. We were delighted to find on Cobb, too, the totally rusted carcasses of a couple of cars. The Coast Guard must have, for some reason, brought them to the island, the logical purpose of which being a little hazy to us. Maybe they were just for joy riding on the hard sand of low tide.

Appetites ran high on Cobb expeditions and we'd usually cook our meals on a Coleman gas stove on the shore there by the boat. Spam, eggs, canned spaghetti and fried apples, pork n' beans and peanut butter and jelly were staples. We'd also have hot dog cookouts on driftwood fires on the beach. I recall how impossible it seemed to keep sand out of the food, the hot dogs always had that characteristic crunch.

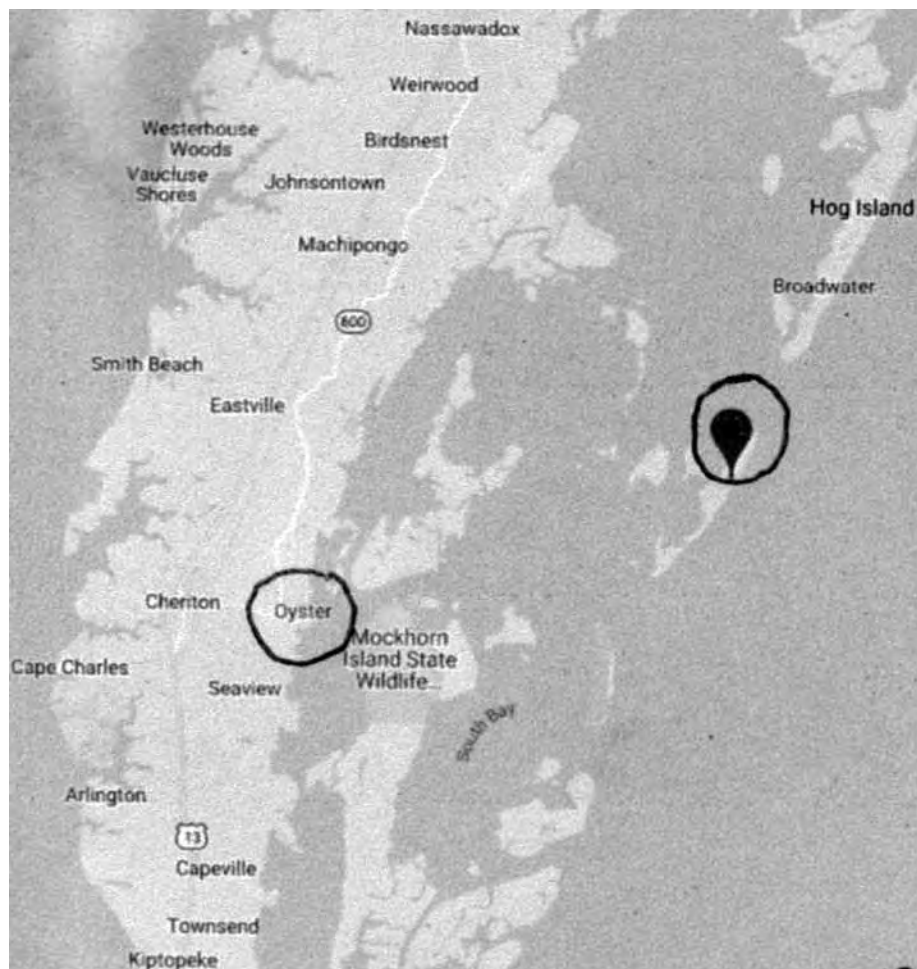
Once when we were camping on the island for a few days, our things spread out all over, the boat stranded on the beach between tides, a Coast Guard helicopter from Norfolk flew low, I mean hovered right over us with the rescue swimmer leaning out of the open side to investigate whether or not we were castaways. We cheerfully waved them off.

In 1970 my dad acquired another boat, a Safe-T-Craft built in Florida, to replace the Barbour. Similar in size, the White Boat, as we imaginatively called it, differed in other ways. Mainly it was built of fiberglass and was powered by a more fuel efficient, marinized six cylinder engine with a Mercruiser stern drive. It did not have an enclosed hard cabin but did have a canvas top and vinyl enclosure around the cockpit and my dad made kid bunks under the bow deck. The White Boat was a great one and made our Cobb Island voyages better than ever. We kids were teenagers by then and could handle pretty much any part of getting to and home from Cobb. After all, we had been attending the "school of the bay" since we were tikes.

We made eight or ten Cobb trips over the years before life moved on for us all, but 15 years after the active voyaging phase was over my brother Kit and I took the White Boat to Cobb once again. The island was just the same and we had a blast visiting the lonely place. We laughed about us having gotten a little softer though. The sun seemed more relentless, the summer heat a little harsher, the salt and sand more diabolical and the hordes of mosquitoes in the marsh at dusk hungrier than ever. None of that had fazed us as kids and we appreciated all the more the fortitude of the grownups of the earlier era.

Today the island chain which includes Cobb is part of The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve and, to maximize protection of the seashore, camping on the islands is not allowed. But on my last visit to Cobb, in the solitude and wildness and centered under an overwhelming disc of blue sky, I relived memories of the place from across the years. On the wind I heard the laughing voices of us kids and I felt the surge and rock of the boat approaching the island shore. I realized that the adventure of those days was buried deep within me and what I experienced on those Cobb trips would be with me forever.

And that includes the sand in my teeth.



The last rays of sunlight gleam across the water to color the sails of *Ida II* in soft gold. As we drift along, the soft “shhhhhh” of the foamy wake behind us is an evening lullaby. I sit in the hull of the boat and watch the crimson orb of the setting sun sink lower, half obscured by a haze of smoky cloud. Birds wing their way home across the sky. In the bow, Nina speaks German softly to Jan-Dirk, who adjusts the tiller and moves us away from a rock that lurks off to starboard. We are passing one of the 40,000 islands that make up the Turku archipelago in the Baltic Sea.



Onboard *Sara*

“Do you want to take the reins?” Nina asks me. She passes over the ropes that attach to the jib and I follow her directions on how to hold the sails out to either side, smiling as they catch the light breeze and pull taut. Out to starboard our fellow sailors angle towards us in their craft *Sara*, her sail a white triangle against the dusky sky as the water turns the color of the sunset.

We are two hours away from the city of Turku, having driven through endless pine forests and ferried across quiet inlets between islands to get here. Our home for the week is a wooden summer cabin on the island of Korpu. There is a jetty for all our sailing needs, a secret mooring point hidden in the reeds (perfect for the adventurers among us) and best of all, a wood heated sauna.

RAID Finland has taken place annually since 2002, held in a new location every time. Each year a different mix of people comes from all over with their boats to spend a week on the water. This time we represent nine countries between the 18 of us. Some old timers return year after year and have seen how RAID Finland has changed in form and purpose while, for some, it’s their very first RAID. Others just come for a summer holiday. But all are bound by their love of sailing and small craft boats. In 2018 I am the only non sailor and it’s like joining a whole new world, terms to learn, maps to decipher and every day a new island to discover.

Our days start with breakfast at 8am, cooked by Minna, vast cauldrons of porridge, jugs of milk, lingonberry jam, fresh rolls, hot out of the oven, and a spread of fruit, spreads and meats to pack a hearty lunch for the day ahead. Some of us have set up tent under the pine trees while others brave the mosquitoes that hide in the cabin for a comfier bed and we joke about who has the worst deal in the morning. Mugs of coffee are cradled as charts are consulted, wind direction noted and weather perused.

Among the Islands

2018 RAID Finland

By Rosie Thomas

Reprinted from *The Shallow Water Sailor*

(SWS Editor’s Note: Norm Wolfe sent me the following article and note: “Attached is an article about RAID Finland 2018 written by an 18-year-old woman from Tasmania touring Europe before entering university. She was invited to participate in RAID Finland by her uncle, Peter Lord. When I saw she was keeping a journal, I asked if she would be interested in writing about her experience.

She is not a sailor (from Tasmania, I thought this was impossible!), she is young and she is female, all of which I think make her perspective interesting. I have helped her with some of the sailing terminology but otherwise the writing is all hers.”)

After much discussion, a course for the day is eventually set and, with a flurry of activity, all six boats are finally on the water, sailing out through the maze of islands. Peter leads the way in his kayak, sometimes disappearing on shortcuts through inlets and channels the bigger boats can’t pass through, only to reappear suddenly miles ahead of us.

We head towards the open water, keeping an eye out for the ferries that could swamp our craft, tiny in comparison. The wind drops and we take up oars, the sea ultramarine and still all around us.

Competition sparks between *Raider* and *Sara* as the latter tries to overtake us, pulling hard on their oars as they glide up from behind. The two boats are neck and neck until *Sara* sweeps triumphantly past, her grinning crew yelling, “We don’t call it “RAID” Finland for nothing!” Norm, on the tiller, shakes his head in mock disgust as they leave us panting in her frothy wake and sighs, “Oh, us old folks can’t beat those young men any more.”

All around, slender pines stand tall on lichen covered rocks, summer cabins hiding quietly beneath their boughs. Dinghies bob gently beside jetties. I trail my fingers idly through the clear water as we weigh anchor by a pebbly beach and am surprised at its warmth and lack of salt. It almost feels as though we are adrift, not on the Baltic Sea, but on a vast lake. We lounge on the hot rocks to eat our lunch and then walk through the fragrant pine to explore the island. David, Matti, Gavin and I reach a highpoint and gaze down over the still water, the dazzle of sunshine glinting off the surface.



We watch as a traditional sailing boat from the Aland Islands appears around the rocks, all elegant maroon sails and dark wood. Reminiscent of a Viking craft, she passes purposefully below us, crewed by members of our group Frederick and Christina. “She really looks like she belongs here, just fits into the landscape, doesn’t she,” Gavin smiles.

“Beautiful,” I nod in agreement and we watch, as, with sails full, she picks up speed and glides out towards the horizon and away. Back at the cabin we cool off from the hot sun and leap off the jetty for a swim before dinner. Meal times are a riot of conversation, topics crossing sailing to politics to music to history to cuisine in a space of five minutes in multiple languages as we crowd around the long table after a day on the water. We eagerly devour Minna’s delicious food and end the day with a sauna, soaking up the heat until we can’t bear it any longer. Outside the window the sun glows through the trees. Gavin and David take to their guitars and sit with the sunset behind them, jamming love songs and shanties and classics as we try and find a song we all know the words to.

Onboard *Raider* again the next day, I sit in the bow and look ahead for signs of a hidden inlet marked on one of our charts. Swiftly we pull away from the other boats as Norm, her captain, confides to me, “We like to make our own adventures.” I’m asked to take the tiller and scramble back past the mast, where Tom hands me the responsibility of steering. Thank God there’s no wind to complicate things, I’m thinking.

“Now just keep us nice and straight, that’s the way.”

“So which way do I turn it?” I have to ask.

“Why don’t you try and find out,” Norm turns and grins at me. Under my dubious steering, we glide through a narrow channel of tall feathery reeds that bend and sway in the breeze and I feel a rush of satisfaction, a sense of how everything works together in balance. Sea and sky and wind, the boat and us.

The weather turns for the worse on the home stretch. “Slow her down a moment, we need another reef in the sail. Wind’s rising.” Fast and efficient, the men lower, fold and tie up the sail. The wind is up to 9 meters/second (17 knots), the sky and sea slate grey and choppy and now we’re flying along, every rope taut and keen. We lean out to balance *Raider* as she dips and yaws, spray flying up and splashing us all. In the bow I’m wet to the skin, facing the waves that drench me every second, exhilarated.

There’s an exclamation from Peter as he holds up the pump he’s been using to bail out

the boat. "The damn thing just broke! It came off in my hand!" He switches to a bucket as we tack again, *Sara* off to the right mirroring our actions as we speed towards home.

We make it back unsunk and take eagerly to the sauna, then crash on the sofa with a book or on the deck with a beer to relax. I look out over the water and watch as the light changes and a stillness settles softly over everything. I think of how lucky we are to be here in late summer among these islands. Above our heads a flock of dragonflies swoop and dive against the lavender sky, forming ever changing patterns in the twilight as our talk turns back to the sea again.

Special thanks to those who let me join their crew for a sail and most of all to my wonderful great uncle Peter, without whom this week could never have been possible.

About the Author

India Rose Thomas is an aspiring writer currently living in Hobart, Tasmania. In 2018 she travelled through Europe and the UK and will soon begin a Bachelor of Arts program at the University of Melbourne. In her spare time, she can be found hiking in Tasmania's wilderness, reading on the beach or drinking coffee in her favorite cafes.

Calm sunset.



Path to the sea.

JD, Rosie and Nina sailing.



The lodge.



At anchor.



Fisherman's cabin.



Auxiliary rowing power.



Beached by the rocks.



Sailing past the rocks.

Norm Wolfe's *Raider*.



Background

This is the fifth in a series of articles in which I describe the beginning of my trip to circumnavigate the “Lower 48” of the United States in a 19’ Cornish Shrimper named *Tidings*. The trip began at Kent Island, Maryland, on May 4, 2018. *Tidings* and I made our way up the Chesapeake Bay to the C&D Canal, through the canal, down the Delaware Bay to the Cape May Canal and up the Intracoastal Waterway to Manasquan, New Jersey. We exited the Manasquan inlet and sailed north in the ocean to Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, where we waited out two days of stormy weather. Then we traveled through New York Harbor, the East River and Long Island Sound to arrive at Mystic, Connecticut, on May 19.

Mystic to Cape Cod

I left *Tidings* on a mooring at the Mason’s Island Yacht Club under the supervision of Mike Wick’s brother Chris on May 20. My intent was to return in three weeks and sail from Mystic to Cape Cod. As it turned out I had a heart attack the night of June 7. There was nothing dramatic about the event. My symptoms were minor but I went to the emergency care clinic because I have a history of coronary artery disease and Meg said we should go. Of course, she was right. I spent the night in the hospital, had an angiogram the next day and was home the evening of June 8. The cardiologist cleared me to go sailing whenever I felt up to it.

My family and friends were less sanguine. In fact, my volunteer crewman for the Mystic to Cape Cod leg of the trip “sprained his ankle” and decided he could not join me. Luckily Mike was willing to sail with me again. I think asking Mike if he wants to go on a sailing trip is like asking a Labrador Retriever if he wants to go swimming. Both are silly questions.

We traveled by train back to New Haven on June 17. Chris met us at the Amtrak station, took us to a supermarket to get provisions for the trip and entertained us at his home that evening. We departed mid morning on June 18 under clear skies flying all plain sail. We decided to ease into the trip by doing a short first day, sailing only a few miles to go explore Stonington Harbor.

Shortly after clearing Mason’s Island we spotted the Mystic Seaport Museum’s schooner *Brilliant* hove to in a gentle swell while the teenage student crew did some training. *Brilliant* is my favorite boat of all time. She is a work of art built in 1932 at the Henry B. Nevins yard in the Bronx. Since 1952 she has been owned and maintained by the museum as a sail training vessel.

I have sailed as “paying crew” aboard *Brilliant* twice, most recently taking her from Newport News, Virginia, back home to Mystic in October of 2017. During that trip Captain Nicholas Alley encouraged me to make the voyage again in my own boat and helped me to better understand coastal navigation. One of my goals for the cruise in *Tidings* was to hail *Brilliant* from my own vessel. And here she was, right in front of us at a standstill. We closed in on her, hailed Captain Alley to introduce ourselves and make clear our intentions and then sailed circles around the famous racing schooner *Brilliant*. Fortune had smiled upon us.

Leaving *Brilliant* to her teaching duties, we sailed to Stonington Harbor in bright sunshine with a fair breeze. I had a moment of

Tidings’ Great Adventure Part 5

By Douglass Oeller

clarity where I understood how lucky I am and how good life can be. There is nothing like a health scare to make us appreciate our blessings. I had been to Stonington by car several times, but this was my first visit under sail. What a wonderful place it is. The harbor has a nice mix of commercial fishing boats and small pleasure craft with an occasional multi million dollar yacht thrown in to make one appreciate the other boats even more. There were so many boats that we didn’t have room to safely maneuver under sail. So we pop, pop, popped along running the D-sail at idle and marveling at the smorgasbord of nautical beauty before us. I will confess to having a wandering eye when it comes to boats. I cast many a covetous glance that afternoon.

We left Stonington Harbor in the late afternoon, deciding to anchor for the night at Watch Hill, Rhode Island, which is only four miles to the east. The channel between the two is very narrow, running through Little Narragansett Bay. Watch Hill harbor is much smaller than Stonington and did not inspire me in the same way. It felt more like visiting an exclusive resort with no sign of working vessels or weather worn sailboats. Instead we found waterfront condominiums, sleek power yachts and a fleet of classic Watch Hill 15 design racing sloops. All very nice but not to my taste. After a quick loop through the harbor we made our way to an anchorage in the lee of Napatree Beach where we spent a pleasant evening enjoying the sea breeze and turned in early.

The next morning was sunny and clear. We motored back out the narrow channel toward Stonington and then out into the Sound heading toward Block Island. It was a glorious morning with sunshine and a moderate breeze. Chris had given us sailing directions for a short cut to clear Fishers Island. Evidently we missed part of the instructions. It got a bit confusing so we followed the channel markers and soon fell in behind a line of sailboats heading east across Long Island Sound.

It is 13 nautical miles from Watch Hill Point to Block Island. We had sunny skies, a gentle swell and a moderate breeze. We were looking forward to a pleasant trip under sail. Unfortunately the wind became very light around mid day when we were only halfway there. I made the tactical error of deciding to persevere under sail alone. There was plenty of daylight left and I figured it would be fine to just kick back, relax and wait for the breeze to return. The problem was that the day became very hot and the motion of the boat in the swells increased as we slowed to about 1.5 knots. After an hour of this I started feeling queasy. Mike, as you might guess, showed no signs of mal de mer. But he did agree that this was no longer pleasant sailing and we might as well use the D-sail.

We reached the Great Salt Pond in the mid afternoon with temperatures and humidity both in the mid 90s and no breeze at all. I felt miserable and must have looked bad because poor Mike kept glancing at me as if doubting the wisdom of this trip and expecting me to have another heart attack. I assured

him that my heart felt fine. I was just mildly seasick and suffering from the heat and humidity. I think it hit me so hard because I was not acclimated to high temperatures. I had spent the previous month mostly indoors in my air conditioned home. Mike expounded on the “curse of central air conditioning” and assured me that I would acclimate after a few more days of outdoor living. In the meantime the remedy was clearly to go ashore and find a watering hole that had air conditioning.

We chose a mooring near The Oar, a famous waterfront bar. We rowed *PS* ashore, left her at the dinghy dock and found cool sanctuary within. The a/c was quickly therapeutic and we decided to spend the rest of the afternoon there nursing a few beers and enjoying delicious cheeseburgers with nary a thought or comment about cardiac health. Although the food is very good, The Oar’s claim to fame is the interior decor which features hundreds of oars donated by visiting boaters. Each oar has the name of the vessel painted on it. The place has oars on the ceiling and all walls. The only clear space is the picture windows overlooking the harbor. It is well worth a visit.

When the sun set we made our exit and rowed back out to *Tidings*. We had chosen a mooring near shore for the convenience of dining and using the amenities. What we had not realized was the other harborfront bar features live music that begins at 9pm. When the band started we had already doused the lights and were almost asleep. I remember thinking that I probably wouldn’t be able to fall asleep until they stopped, but at least the band was good. As it turned out the ‘70s music served as a lullaby and I was asleep before they finished the first set.

The following morning, June 20, we had breakfast aboard and then rowed *PS* ashore to use the amenities and buy some ice. Block Island offers much for the tourist. There are hotels, shops, restaurants and miles of beautiful sandy beaches. Visitors can rent motor scooters or take a taxi to tour the island. But we had other places to go. We slipped our mooring and departed the Great Salt Pond toward Cuttyhunk Island under pleasant sailing conditions at 0835 hours. The distance from Block Island to Cuttyhunk Island is about 35 miles. The route is through the waters of Rhode Island Sound with no shelter available. This would be the longest open water passage to date. But the conditions were favorable. The marine forecast promised winds of 5-10 knots. The wave heights were less than 1’ and the morning was pleasantly cool.

We wanted to arrive at Cuttyhunk harbor well before sunset. I did a quick time and distance calculation as we cleared the tip of the Block Island Reef at 0950 hours. Traveling 35 miles at a speed of 4 knots takes about nine hours. (People my age can do that calculation in our head.) Luckily it was one day before the summer solstice and we had about 10.5 hours of daylight remaining with sunset occurring at 2022 hours. This gave us a one hour margin of safety if we could maintain a direct course at a speed of at least 4 knots. As the day progressed we plotted our positions hourly on the chart to make sure we stayed on schedule. I mention this so that readers will better understand the difference between a casual daysail and a coastal passage, which requires a lot more planning.

The pleasant westerly breeze was favorable and we easily maintained boat speed

and heading under sail alone. But the leeway took us slightly south of our desired track. At 1500 hours we started motor sailing in order to stop the leeway and allow *Tidings* to point higher. This was necessary to ensure we would pass safely to the north of Sows and Pigs Reef as we approached the southern end of Cuttyhunk.

About an hour later the skies darkened and the wind picked up to 15-20 knots. We reefed the mainsail, furling about a third of the jib, and increased the rpm's on the D-sail to get us to windward efficiently as we passed north of the reef and the island. The harbor entrance is around the northern tip of the island. To reach it vessels must go through a narrow, shallow and rocky stretch of water called the Middle Ground. Once we reached the Middle Ground there was no further need for the D-sail because our destination was to leeward of us.

We shut it down and enjoyed tacking through this challenging area like proper sailormen with only the sound of the wind and the spray and the helmsman yelling, "Ready about? Helm's a lee!" The wind and waves increased as we neared the harbor entrance, which is very narrow. We were upwind of the entrance and discussing whether we should lower the mainsail and proceed under jib alone when we noticed that the crew of the boat ahead of us had lowered all sail and were motoring into the harbor.

Although it was very tempting to "wipe their eye" by entering the harbor and anchoring under sail, prudence suggested that we should follow their example instead. So we two prudent mariners motored *Tidings* through the narrow entrance of Cuttyhunk harbor and found a safe spot to anchor as the wind picked up even further and the rain began to fall. Once the boat was secure we lit the oil lamp in the cabin, prepared a meal of canned stew on the butane stove and enjoyed the hot meal in that warm, safe, dry space while listening to the rain on the roof and feeling very grateful that we were not cruising in an open boat this time.

Cuttyhunk Island is at the southern tip of the Elizabeth Islands which are a chain of small islands extending southwest from the southern coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. They are located at the outer edge of Buzzards Bay, north of Martha's Vineyard from which they are separated by Vineyard Sound (thank you Wikipedia.) Most of the other islands are privately owned by the Forbes family and public access is limited to some beaches and picnic areas. Cuttyhunk is not owned by the Forbes and much of the land is available to the public.

The natural harbor offers shelter in most weather conditions. The land mass of the island is only about 0.9 square miles. The year round population is listed at 52 people. In the summer that swells to 400. There is a small village near the harbor with a fuel dock and a few amenities to serve fishermen and cruising yachtsmen. But nothing is fancy. No gaudy waterfront restaurants. No million dollar condos. No nautical boutiques. No wine shops selling 15 different brands of imported olives.

I fell in love with the place and found it to be a wonderful antidote to Watch Hill and Block Island. I hope it stays that way forever. Sometimes I daydream of Meg and me retiring there to increase the population to 54. I wonder if there is a residency qualification test.

Mike and I awoke to a light drizzle and cool, cloudy weather in Cuttyhunk harbor the

morning of June 21. After the standard breakfast of oatmeal and hot coffee, we bailed out *PS* and started our row to shore. We were passing a '60s vintage fiberglass sloop when the owner hailed us from the cockpit for a morning gam. He told us that he was a widower in his 70s and had sailed that same boat as a teenager when his father bought it brand new. The boat was sold out of the family but this gentleman had located and repurchased it when he retired in his mid 60s. He now spends much of each summer cruising in New England. And he really wanted to talk.

We enjoyed the conversation and admired his vintage sloop and Dyer dinghy. But, after two cups of coffee and the hot breakfast, reaching the shoreside restroom had become a matter of some urgency. I explained this to the loquacious cruiser in the politest terms possible and rowed us ashore at flank speed.

After taking care of the most urgent tasks, Mike and I agreed to part company and each do some solo exploration. We both enjoy a bit of private time on these trips when the opportunity arises. He headed up the street toward Lookout Hill, the highest point on the island. I ambled down the dock because the cruising guide mentioned a bakery with excellent donuts not to be missed. Sadly the bakery was no longer in business. But I did find a tiny store that offered supplies for sport fishermen, hot coffee and a few baked goods.

After fortification with a Danish pastry and my third cup of coffee, I decided to take a walk, too. My scalded left foot was now mostly healed but my sciatic pain persisted, leaving me with a "hitch in my gaitalong." I had to go slowly and rest often but it was worth the effort. I passed charming houses, a local store that is open only a few hours each week, old orchards gone fallow and some small properties that had the appearance of self sufficiency with large gardens and small chicken houses. There were fields of wildflowers in bloom with cottontail rabbits frolicking. Songbirds were in full serenade mode. And, as I climbed higher, the view of the harbor and adjacent islands was stunning. That morning walk was one of the highlights of my summer cruise.

Mike was still enjoying the view at the top of Lookout Hill when I arrived. We took a few photos, then walked backed down to the dock to buy some ice and row back out to *Tidings*. The weather was clearing so we weighed anchor and motored back out to open water at 1200 hours. As soon as we were clear of the harbor entrance we hoisted all sail and set a course toward Woods Hole, which is about 12 miles to the northeast. We made good time under sunny skies, passing close to the shorelines of Nashawena, Pasque and Naushon Islands, admiring their unspoiled beauty. Private ownership and the limited use policy have protected the native plants and wildlife. I hope that it continues to do so.

We had consulted a tide chart because Woods Hole has a famously dangerous tide rip. The goal was to pass though at slack tide just before the southeast flood. We arrived early and decided to take a detour into Hadley Harbor where Mike spent many happy hours as a young boy on his parent's boat. He told me that it was one of the family's favorite anchorages. There is a passage from Hadley Harbor past Bull Island into Inner Harbor. We lowered sails, started the D-sail and

enjoyed seeing the nice homes, many with classic yachts on moorings. There was what looked like a small sailing club with at least six Herreshoff 12^{1/2}s moored nearby. Mike said that some of those boats were there in the 1960s, probably the very same boats. We found a spot to drop anchor for a lunch break before heading back out to pass through Woods Hole.

The lunch break was a mistake because it put us behind schedule. When we reached the narrow portion of Woods Hole the current was already moving very fast. The good thing was that it was moving in our desired direction of travel. The bad thing was that the passage was crowded with boat traffic, including ferries that do not alter course for small vessels. There is a section in one of my cruising guides that warns, "Navigating Woods Hole is tricky, potentially dangerous for a combination of reasons. Foremost is the current. It routinely flows through at over 4 knots (80-90% of velocities in the Cape Cod Canal) and, according to Eldridge, will hit 7 knots on occasion. The full current on the nose makes transit slow and awkward. The full current from astern will cause things to happen at an alarmingly rapid pace." Well, they got that part right.

We were proceeding under power only and I made the mistake of throttling back the engine because the current was already moving us along at what I felt was a reasonable speed. Then I noticed that a large nun buoy was "approaching us" at an alarmingly rapid pace. I could not steer the boat because there was no flow of water over the rudder. We were moving at the speed of the current like a leaf carried down a stream. And it appeared that collision was imminent.

Luckily I had experienced the same loss of response to helm earlier in the trip while transiting the East River and I knew what to do. I gave the engine full throttle to get some propeller wash going over the rudder. *Tidings* then responded to the helm and we dodged the buoy with a few feet to spare. I looked over at Mike and he seemed tense. That made two of us. We continued to dodge ferries, powerboats and more buoys and finally made a safe exit from Woods Hole, stopping to catch our breath and let our pulses return to baseline when we cleared the eastern end of the channel. Without a doubt, that big buoy charging toward us was the scariest moment of the 2018 cruise. If ever I go through Woods Hole again it will be at slack tide. I promise.

Having cleared Woods Hole, we had a decision to make about where to spend the night. We could head south toward Martha's Vineyard or north toward Cape Cod. I have never been to Martha's Vineyard and was curious about visiting. But Mike's previous experience and the information I read in the cruising guide made me think it would be too crowded at this time of year. It is a destination easily reached by ferry so I decided to leave that visit for some other time when the crowds would be smaller. We charted a course toward Cape Cod instead, choosing Falmouth Harbor as our destination.

We had a favorable wind so raised the sails, stopped the engine and enjoyed a nice romp across Nantucket Sound, reaching the harbor around 1600 hours. I wanted to stay at a marina so we could recharge our devices, take a shower and empty the porta potti. We chose MacDougalls from a list in the *Cruising Guide*, knowing only that it was listed as a full service marina. When we arrived I

hailed the marina on the VHF radio to ask if they had a transient slip available for a small sailboat. I was surprised to get the response, "I don't know. We do all our booking on the internet."

After explaining that I was in a 19' boat and did not have ready access to the internet, we were directed to the fuel dock where a handsome and well tanned young dockmaster greeted us and said we could tie up at a nearby floating dock astern a 62' power cruiser. We secured *Tidings* in the designated spot and then walked back to the fuel dock to buy a bag of ice and complete the registration process, which involved getting me set up with a "Dockwa" account. Dockwa is a computer application that lets boaters reserve and pay for slips from a computer or smartphone. I used it several more times while cruising in

Maine later in the summer and found it to be quick and easy.

MacDougalls Cape Cod Marine Service is an outstanding marina. Everything there was high quality and well maintained. The slips and service area were full of beautiful boats and we were made to feel welcome despite being the smallest vessel there. I enjoyed the visit. It was hot and sunny when we arrived so Mike and I decided to relax with an iced beverage before trudging back up the dock to the showers. The professional captain of the nearby yacht noticed us and came down for a friendly chat and to inspect *Tidings*. We shared a drink and talked of boats, sailing and favorite places.

This yacht was not of the Clorox bottle variety. She had lovely classic lines with a dark green hull, buff colored decks and a tasteful amount of brightwork. For a tender she carried an Arey's Pond 14 catboat at the aft end of her flying bridge. We were impressed. The captain told us that the owners enjoy using the yacht more as a floating hotel than a cruiser. He and a professional mate move her up and down the East Coast and into the Caribbean. The owners meet the yacht at various marinas where they enjoy dining at restaurants, entertaining guests and sleeping aboard. He had never lowered the anchor in several years of service. He spoke respectfully of his employers and said he enjoyed working for them and having the responsibility to maintain the yacht properly and take her safely to a variety of pleasant places. That sounds like a pretty good gig to me, too.

When the captain left, Mike and I made our way up to the wood paneled bathhouse where we enjoyed luxurious warm showers. Then we walked around the perimeter of the harbor to dine at a waterfront restaurant on the opposite side. You would think that two people spending day and night on a small boat might want to get away from the water occasionally. But we always seem to gravitate to places with a view of the water. After the meal we made our way back to the boat, enjoyed a nightcap and turned in early knowing that that boat traffic would begin at sunrise the next day.

As predicted, we were rocked awake by boats passing shortly after dawn on June 22. We fixed breakfast aboard and enjoyed watching the parade. Most were sport fishing boats but there were also a few cruisers getting an early start. We walked back over to the fuel dock, bought some more ice and joined the procession of outward bound vessels. Our destination for this final day of the cruise was Cotuit Harbor where I would leave *Tidings* on a mooring for a week while Mike and I returned home. The distance from Falmouth Harbor is about 15 miles and there was no reason to hurry. We proceeded under sail alone enjoying the day. It was pleasant to not worry about tides or navigation or murderous ferry boats bearing down on us. We just followed a line of buoys along the coast to keep clear of the shallow areas.

We reached the entrance to Cotuit Bay in the early afternoon. The chart shows a narrow channel, dredged to a depth of 5' running through a sandbar with depths of 1'-2'. Deciding once again to be prudent mariners, we lowered sail and let the D-sail push us safely into the anchorage. After securing the boat, I left Mike aboard to tidy up while I took a water taxi ashore. I got an Uber ride to the nearest rental car location, obtained a car

for the drive home and returned to the harbor two hours later with ice, cold beer and some snacks for our final night aboard *Tidings*.

The following morning dawned with heavy rain. We could see the driver of the water taxi sitting in his pickup truck near the dock. But we could not raise him on the VHF. I loaded *PS* with our trash and recycling bags, rowed ashore, walked over to the truck and tapped on the window. The boatman rather grumpily agreed to go and fetch Mike and our luggage. We secured *PS* among a row of beached dinghies, waved farewell to *Tidings* bobbing out there on her mooring, loaded up the rental car, and headed for home.




About that Ice

An astute reader might notice that I bought ice every time we went ashore. The daytime temperatures during this trip were mostly in the 90s and the temperature in the cabin probably exceeded that because *Tidings* has a black colored hull that absorbs heat. The cooler we used is a Yeti Roadie 20 that Meg gave me for Christmas. It was an expensive gift and we joked about how much money I would save on ice.

That turned out not to be the case. During this trip the ice melted within 24 hours. The contents (lunchmeat, cheese, milk, butter, frozen vegetables, drinks) would stay cool for two days but the ice cubes rarely lasted more than a day. I enjoy a glass of bourbon on ice in the evening after dropping the anchor so I added fresh ice whenever the opportunity arose. Someone later told me that the Yeti can keep block ice frozen for several days if everything you put into the cooler is already cold. That doesn't work well for camp cruising because the Roadie 20 is too small for block ice and you need to open it several times daily when preparing meals or removing cold drinks. I like the Yeti. It is well-built and very sturdy. But I don't think the performance is much better than my Coleman cooler.

To Be Continued

(The Delaware River Chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association works to preserve and continue the living traditions, skills, lore and legends surrounding working and pleasure craft whose origins predate the maritime gasoline engine. It encourages the design, construction and use of these boats. Whether you have an interest in traditional boat building, messing about in small boats, or helping preserve our maritime heritage come join us and share the camaraderie of kindred spirits.



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Copono Bay

Copono Bay is the other body of water surrounding the peninsula on which we live. I went for a first sail there yesterday, winds gusting to 25. Leaving the docks I noted the wind was at my back. I hadn't sailed here before and wanted to see more of the bay's shore from the water. The ramp was by the highway near the mouth of the bay. I was going further in and knew it would be a slog back uphill. I went anyway.

Mid 70s, not me just yet, the air, but with the still cold water and wind such as it was, the yellow foul weather top was soon on over the harness I wear. The pants came a few minutes later as the spray kicked up with the wind.

The water being shallow the chop was short and steep with some white stuff thrown in the mix. I went out onto the bay about a half mile off the beach and after about 45 minutes, nearing the point with an abundance of houses I picked out a two story painted with the Texas Coastal Color, Turquoise. Easy to see almost a mile further on.

Reaching my goal of the day I saw it was about an hour and 15 minutes. It had been a quick run at four to six knots at times. I had already dropped the main and tied in the first reef and decided to leave it in, less sail up the better in this wind.

There seemed to be a wind channel or vortex, for lack of better term, in one wide area of this part of the bay. There were very few sport fishermen out, maybe a handful, about a dozen oyster boats but no other sailing craft. Going back uphill I tried long tacks across the bay, which after a while didn't seem to be giving me much gain for the time involved.

I moved in closer to shore and started short tacking my way back to the docks. Getting in close as I did I began seeing signs of life along the various beach fronts at the privately owned homes and piers. I sailed as close as possible before tacking back out, using the calm waters behind the piers and bulkheads to my advantage.

Three hours the ride back took. A few what ifs showed up while I was out there, the other shore was way to far to swim, a dismasting would put me on a deserted beach belonging to a rancher. That'd had been a long walk if. But it didn't, it did, however, give food for thought.

Trying to Rain

This picture shows it to be trying to rain one afternoon when I went out at Cove Harbour, turned left. There was a Whaler 5.2 sailboat just leaving the dock when I was backing my trailer towards the ramp. They loaded up with three adults and a younger one. They got out of the harbour way before me. That little gasoline thing hanging on the back end give them quit a push.

I used to have one myself, still do actually. I leave it in the shed. I've grown to enjoy sailing out from the dock. Gets kinda exciting at times, being a working commercial harbour. The propwash from the tugs pushing barges around will put me places I just don't want to go. Once when I was leaving the dock, a tug was pushing a barge up against the bulkhead, holding it in position for some reason. I thought I could sneak behind and use the wash to give me a boost across the harbour.

Didn't quite work out as planned. Had there been boats tied to the piles I was careening through like a carom I'd have been

Meanderings Along the Coast of Texas

By Michael Beebe

in a real mess. As it was, being bounced and pushing off the piles was enough. I recommend not trying this alone or with somebody.

Brings to mind one of the coffee guys the other morning had a mini stroke. The fellows were in a fluster. I had left so it didn't happen on my watch. I heard later that one fellow was standing there like a preacher telling the congregation of retired coffee drinkers the authorities needed to be notified. Pull his licenses, as in plural, the poor guy even has a small airplane. It was getting hot there for a bit. One fellow, called Coach, told me all this, chuckling. I mentioned to him it'd be better not to have those things happen in public if'n it can be helped. After something like that they'll want to take away all your toys.

Well, before I took the picture of the raindrops, the Whaler was on its way back in. We exchanged pleasantries. The wind maybe a strong five or less, had me motor sailing. I anchored for maybe 20 minutes, ate some peanuts, enjoyed the view. Getting back to the ramp as the Whaler crew was driving away, I guess they didn't have anything else to say. Neither did I, I guess. Nothing pressing anyway.

My wife didn't care for the picture. Needs paint. It's a commercial harbour!



Potter and I

The Potter and I went for a sail recently. First time in a while so I hesitated, debating whether to go out or not. Standing by the bow in the parking lot, empty save for one other power boater, I know the guy, I would have it all to myself. I even walked to the end of the dock before prepping the boat on its trailer, just to make sure I was going. The wind gave me some pause.

Deciding to go, I was slow and meticulous in getting ready. The determining factor in going was leaving the dock, the wind blowing as it was, was almost straight into the ramp, almost. That "almost" gave just enough room for a longer starboard tack, getting away from the dock. And I would only get blown back to an empty ramp and recovery, if needed, wouldn't be hard. Once away, it should be manageable.

This was only my second sail in this boat, first sail in any wind, thus the reserve. I didn't even hank on the jib, I put the main up with its one and only reef. Prepped the anchor for a quick release if needed. Closed

the companionway tight as it would let me. I'd read the Potters don't like coming about with just a reefed main flying. I found that untrue, but before I did the concern was there on the dock with me.

The designer of the Potter says to carry weight forward, mine has flotation forward, go figure. Another thing I did while still at home, I ran the centerboard controls out into the cockpit, added two jam cleats and two horn cleats. Very thankful I did that. I can raise and lower the centerboard or lock it in the down position. Later, out in the stuff, I bottomed out on the lee shore. Being able to keep the cabin secure and have the centerboard lines there in the cockpit kept me from an awkward situation. I did not have my water shoes with me. And I really didn't want to get my street shoes wet.

The fisherman and his company came in and tied up behind me, taking away my small window of a safety net or reducing the room I had before their arrival. Before leaving the dock one of the fellows offered to cast me off. Declining his help, "Nah, I need to push off myself into a sailable position." He understood. Then I added, "I might be back here in a few moments anyway."

I almost was, the first near capsized came with the second tack, with a \$40,000 fishing boat now in my way the odds were up. The other two came further out into the channel. Why did I go? Well, I wanted to see firsthand just how this girl was going to handle in a bit of a wind, the Potter was whistling. She did well, very well. With a few hundred pounds forward, flotation rearranged, this old gal is going to sea, some action. Should be nice.

Oh, and by the way the inside liner is coming out, a piece at a time. I know I will have to strengthen the hull, not sure just what direction that will go just yet, but it's already started. The end results will be comfortable sitting head room for two, plenty of leg room, a closed cell mattress to sleep on, compliments of Harvey, the not so recent wind that blew through here almost two years ago.

There are other benefits of doing this interior remodeling, those two tiny under berth lockers were nigh worthless. This jettison of the liner will as well allow some lead up front, secured quite well. The 1/8" plastic ports will be leaving also, 1/4" Lexan to replace. Seat lockers, lifting lid type, P&S. Each watertight in its own right. All this for what? Well, you never know, you never know.



Buying a ComPac 16

During the winter Katharina had spent some time in Clearwater. I had driven down without *Leppo* to spend a short time there and then we would drive home together. Bicycling around the local residential area I saw a nautical orphan emitting plaintive wails. It was a small forlorn fiberglass sailboat on an extremely rusty and decrepit looking trailer sitting in a vacant lot. Of course, I had to stop to take a closer look. The boat called to me, just like a tiny stray kitten meowing for help. I heard the call and I had to stop and help.

The boat, as I read from the builder's nameplate in the cockpit, was a ComPac 16. It had an aluminum mast and boom and the mast was held in place by a forestay and two shrouds. It had a small cabin with two berths. It looked like an excellent solution to the Micro free standing mast stepping problem.



The ComPac 16, I discovered, was built right there in Clearwater so I drove to the factory and had a look at one of their new, fully rigged boats that was sitting on a trailer to get a better idea of what it was and what it really looked like. The ComPac 16 seemed to be a good replacement for *Leppo*. It was roughly the same size.

Making some inquiries among the neighbors living around the vacant lot, I finally was able to obtain the boat owner's name, address and telephone number. I had the feeling that he was anxious to sell the boat as is, where is, after talking with him. He just wanted to get rid of it. I made him a ridiculous offer which was instantly accepted (that told me I had paid too much for the boat) but even my offered very low price was OK for me. The next day, the ComPac 16's boat registration and the trailer registration were signed over to me by the owner as I gave him the purchase price funds.

My first problem was the rusted out trailer. I had to totally rebuild the trailer so that we could tow the ComPac 16 back to Connecticut. After examining the rusted springs, spring hangers, flat tires and rusted rims more closely, I decided that I had to disassemble the trailer completely and replace all the rust destroyed components with new equipment. (The Glenn-L Trailer Book I had previously bought had now made me a semi trailer "expert"). To start the process I bought a few tools, a metal hacksaw to cut off the rusty bolts as well as a jack to lift up the trailer frame/boat so that I could remove the wheels and the axle.

Sailing Adventures

Going Trailer Sailing Part 2

By Conbert H. Benneck

I started cutting bolts and the trailer disassembly began. With all the bolts holding the springs cut and detached from the frame, I could pull out the axle. The tires were flat and the rubber was totally deteriorated and unusable. It needed new wheel rims and new tires, a new axle with new wheel hubs and bearings, a new set of springs and the necessary nuts and bolts to put it all back together again. Luckily, a few miles away from our apartment there was a trailer parts store that supplied everything I needed, including advice and expertise. After a few days' work a new axle, new springs and new trailer wiring had been installed. The new wheel rims had new tires and everything was put back together again. Our trip home from Clearwater, Florida, to Connecticut with another new boat in tow was uneventful.

I put the ComPac 16 in one half of our garage and started a major overhaul of the boat. After stripping off coats of latex house paint from the hull I found a large repaired area at the bow. I presumed that it was damage caused by a Florida hurricane. After I had repaired the boat properly, repainted the hull, varnished the woodwork and the rigging was in order, I still needed one final item, a 2hp outboard auxiliary engine. This time Murphy, making amends for the many obstacles he had obstructed me with in the past, decided to come to my aid, tapping me on the shoulder he had me look at the "Tag Sale" Classifieds on just the right day (there are times when Murphy decides to help us rather than his normal practice which is to hinder us).

Murphy poked my nose at a Saturday Tag Sale ad in the *Glastonbury Citizen's* classified ads that read, "Outboards for Sale." Outboards for sale! I was at the address at 7:45 Saturday morning, ringing the doorbell. When I asked about the outboards that were being offered, the man who opened the door told me that he had two outboards, a 25hp and a 2hp Suzuki. My interest was the small 2hp Suzuki. His answer to my question was, "Yes it was still available."

"Did it run?"

"Well, yes, but it needed some work."

"How much are you asking for it?"

"\$25," he said.

I inspected the engine. It turned over smoothly when I pulled on the starter cord. That was a very good sign. I bought it for the \$25 asking price. Once home, I carried my new engine downstairs to my shop and started doing some engine disassembly, removing the cylinder head bolts and taking off the cylinder head. I found all the cooling water passages around the cylinder filled with caked salt from engine use in salt water.

I cleaned out all the cooling water passages. I bought and installed a new head gasket and a new water pump impeller. I filled my little outboard test barrel with water, fastened the engine to the rim of the barrel, put some fresh fuel in the tank and pulled the starter cord. The engine ran happily and cooling water in the proper amount came out of the water drain holes.

It was time to head to Lake Champ-lain again. Our new toy was in tip top con-

dition. Stepping the lightweight aluminum mast with shrouds at the Willsboro ramp was very easy, a piece of cake, a big plus point for the ComPac 16. The boat was launched. To make life simpler, I sailed it back to the Essex Shipyard by myself so that Katharina could drive the car with trailer back to the Essex Shipyard and meet me there. I had to tack down the lake a few times to finally reach Essex Shipyard but the boat sailed nicely on a close reach. At the entrance to the Shipyard I dropped the sails, started the Suzuki and motored in to our dock. The first trip with the ComPac 16 was concluded.

However, after a week of daily sailing under a variety of weather conditions we were getting very familiar with the ComPac 16's sailing characteristics. I slowly discovered that what I had bought in haste in Clearwater because it seemed to solve a problem could now be repented at leisure as new owners. I hadn't done my homework properly concerning the ComPac 16. During the week there had been a rapidly growing number of "buts." These butts were:

The whole front cabin of the boat was just a big empty cave and pretty useless.

A mast support post was right in the middle of the cabin.

Berths P/S were half under the cockpit seats. Forget about any connubial bliss.

The berth areas were also the only useable storage space. We had to put everything in plastic crates and slide them back on the berths.

There were no sail lockers in the cockpit. Whenever we wanted anything we had to drag the right crate out from a berth. Then, at night, where do we put all these crates if we want to sleep? In the cockpit? In the rain? However, the most serious fault of the ComPac 16 was that it sailed badly. Sailing to windward was something the ComPac 16 intensely disliked doing. It made almost as much leeway as it made forward progress. It was reasonably happy on a close reach and on a broad reach but please, please don't ask it to go to windward.

Having owned and sailed boats that had been properly designed to sail and every one of them had gone to windward willingly and well when asked to do so, I wasn't about to live with all these butts. It was time to annul this hasty marriage with the ComPac 16 and find a more suitable sailing bride, one who knew what was expected of her and who enjoyed doing it.

Back in Connecticut, I put an ad in a sailing publication and soon found a willing buyer who wanted a ComPac 16. It disappeared down the highway to a new home behind a different car with a new owner. Not a tear was shed. Now what?

The lessons the ComPac 16 had taught me were that at my age the lightweight aluminum mast with shrouds made mast stepping easy. At least I had gotten that part of the requirement correct. The boat size had been very good as well. What I needed was something about the same size and configuration, but with the items that were important for us and that the ComPac 16 didn't possess:

Good sailing to windward characteristics.

Good onboard storage for boat equipment with cockpit accessible sail lockers.

A usable and practical cabin interior without a mast support post.

Good interior storage capabilities.

Cockpit seats long enough to sleep on comfortably.

The Montgomery 15

For years I had subscribed to this delightful and very interesting publication, *Messing About in Boats*. At one point *Messing About in Boats* had published several articles written by Charles Mathews of Gainesville, Florida, describing his week long sailing trips on the St Johns River in Florida while living aboard his Montgomery 15 sailboat. Charles had written about ghosting along in the faintest of breezes and then sailing lee rail under when it was blowing. He was filled with praise for the Montgomery 15's sailing as well as for its liveaboard, characteristics.

The impression I got was that the Montgomery 15 seemed to be just what I was seeking. The only problem was they had been built in California and there appeared to be none available anywhere on the East Coast that I could examine. In one of the next issues of *Messing About in Boats* I read in a classified ad a plaintive plea by a man saying he was looking for a Montgomery 15.

"He had sold his M15 a year earlier," he said, "and it was the biggest mistake I have made in my whole life. Won't someone please sell me another M15?"

That really caused me to perk up my ears. Here was someone so in love with his boat that he was pleading with anyone who had a Montgomery 15 to please sell it to him, so that he could be happy again. That sounded very similar to the feelings we had for our Tripp-Lentsch 29 after 26 years of ownership. I could sing second bass harmony to that same refrain as well.

He listed a phone number in his ad so, doing things the easy way, I picked up the phone and gave him a call, which resulted in a long conversation about Montgomery 15s and, the more I heard from him, the better it sounded. His comments all echoed exactly what Charlie Mathews had written about the Montgomery 15 in his various articles. He very kindly sent me a copy of the original sales brochure for the Montgomery 15 so that I could read it, and see the details of the boat for myself.

He also gave me the email address of a Montgomery owner's group that could answer any questions I might have in far greater detail.

When the brochure finally arrived I studied it and was amazed. The Montgomery 15 had a large double berth in the bow of the boat. The mast was stepped on the cabin top. There was no compression post under the mast in the middle of the cabin. The whole cabin interior was wide open and accessible. There was good storage capacity available inside the cabin. There was even a porta potti on board. The cockpit seats P/S had large sail locker lids. Obviously, it was a boat designed by an experienced sailor who clearly knew what was required for a well functioning boat.

As I generated questions about the M15 and posted them on the M15 website, my questions were rapidly answered by several people who all sang the M15 praise song, in multi part harmony. The main point I noted was that every M15 owner was hugely enthusiastic about his M15 and, as they answered my questions, each owner highly recommended one to me. Gradually the continuous repetition of their messages began to seep in.

The big brother of the M15, the Montgomery 17 had been designed by Lyle Hess, a noted yacht designer. The M15 was similar to the M17 but had added refinements made by a highly competitive sailor, Jerry Montgom-

ery, who had built both boats in his shop in California. The more homework I did among the M15 owners on their website, the more I became convinced that the M15 sounded like what we needed as a replacement for the ComPac 16. The M15 was a foot shorter than the ComPac 16 but it was a real ship, designed for day sailing and for longer trips.

One M15 website member recounted his three week cruise up the Inside Passage on the Canadian west coast with his wife, living onboard the whole time. Another owner had single handedly sailed his M15 from San Diego to Hawaii. The more I heard, the more convinced I became that an M15 was going to be our next boat. All the information I had received was extremely positive, especially my now very pointed questions about the M15's upwind sailing characteristics.

Slowly I was coming to the decision that I wanted a Montgomery 15, the next problem became finding a used one that I could buy. New ones were no longer being built so that possibility didn't exist. One of the men I had exchanged emails with gave me the name and email address of a fellow West Coast M15 owner who, he said, "might" want to sell his boat.

I sent him an email. He answered that "yes," he had been thinking of selling his well equipped M15. There was only one slight problem. He lived in Sacramento, California, and I was in Glastonbury, Connecticut. I lived on the Right Coast and he lived on the Left Coast of the US. How do I get his boat from California to Connecticut? More emails went back and forth and finally he offered to bring his boat east and deliver it to me if I paid his one way travel expenses. He had always wanted to visit Boston and New England and this would be a good excuse for him to finally make the trip.

That was a very good solution for me so I sent him another email accepting his offer. His reply was discouraging, and encouraging. He told me that on further consideration he just couldn't sell me his M15. He loved his boat far too much and had decided to keep it. Now what?

A few days later I got another email from him telling me that he had just seen an ad in a West Coast marine publication *Latitude 38* for an M15 that was located in Panama City, Florida. That brought an M15 a lot closer to Connecticut. The boat was owned by a man living in Sausalito, California. He gave me the contact information.

I called the M15 owner in Sausalito and we had another long phone conversation. Boat condition? Equipment? Engine? Sails? Trailer? Trailer condition (I now knew the proper kinds of specific trailer questions to ask)? He answered all my questions and told me that the boat was already packed for a long trip since he had planned to pick it up at his mother's house in Panama City, Florida, and then drive back to California.

After I hung up the telephone Katharina asked me what the owner had said. I recounted all the details and said he was going to send me photos of the boat and trailer so I could see more. Katharina said, "Buy it now before someone else buys the boat." If there is anything wrong with the boat, or the trailer, you certainly know how to fix it, and at that price, it sounds like a very good buy." Katharina was right.

I called the owner again and told him I'd take the boat, sight unseen. He gave me the details of his preferred payment method. My

bank transferred the payment to his account in Sausalito and he immediately sent me the boat and trailer registration papers, filled out, signed and listing me as the new owner by FedEx overnight delivery, which I received a day later.



Bringing The Montgomery 15 Home

The first major problem had just been solved. We had located and bought a used Montgomery 15. We now owned another sailboat again. The relatively minor problem, was that the boat was in Panama City, Florida, which was 1,200 miles away from Glastonbury, Connecticut. The next job, go get it and bring the new toy home. I called my old friend John Moody, who lived in Washington, DC, and asked if he was ready to lend a hand on the delivery trip.

My tool boxes, with tools for the boat and for trailer repairs, covering every possibility I could imagine, jacks for the trailer, chocks, tie down straps, bungee cords and any potential electrical problems on the trailer wiring or lighting were loaded in the car. With the VW-GTI packed I headed for Washington, DC, picked up John and together we drove to Panama City, Florida, arriving late in the afternoon. We found a motel, checked in and then drove to the address I had been given to get a first look at my new boat.

There stood the Montgomery 15 on its trailer under a carport in front of a small house. I introduced myself to the owner's mother. She told me her son had already called and told her that I was the new owner and was coming to pick up the boat. John and I walked around the boat, the initial impression was very good. The hull was clean and only showed very minor wear and tear.

I inspected the trailer, a proper sized trailer for that size boat. It had a few minor rust spots but it, too, was in very good condition. The only things I saw that initially bothered me were the many cracks in the sidewalls of the tires.

We climbed into the cockpit and opened the companionway hatch. Lying on the big berth in the cabin was the Honda 2hp four cycle outboard motor, neatly and carefully wrapped in bubble paper. The sails were folded, a main and a working jib, the aluminum boom, sheets,

mooring lines, fenders, all were well stowed for a long road trip to California (or now to Connecticut). It is one thing to look at a drawing, or even at a photo of a boat in a brochure, but actually sitting in the cockpit and noting how things physically fitted together and how well thought out they were gave me a much better impression. My first impression of the M15 itself was very good.

Our plan to depart the next morning was abruptly cancelled by a fierce storm that arrived that night and which raged across the Florida Panhandle the whole next day. We looked out the window of our motel room mid morning at the driving rain. The tops of the palm trees were bent over, looking like giant feather dusters being furiously shaken by the 30 knot winds.

The next morning the violent winds were gone, the sun shone again, the palm trees were at rest. Florida was back to being its normal sunny, tourist brochure self. It was time for us to get going. We drove back to the mother's house and hooked up the trailer, checking the operation of trailer stop lights and brake lights. Everything worked properly. We checked tire pressures in the trailer tires, and pumped them up to the correct amount.

As we drove off, our first stop was at a trailer shop to get new tires before we started our long trip north. When they looked at our tires the trailer shop people told us that, based on their experience, they were in good shape and the sidewall cracking we saw was standard for any trailer tires that sat outdoors in Florida sunshine. They felt that we shouldn't have a problem driving to Connecticut with the current tires. If we really wanted to buy new tires we'd have to wait another day until they could order them from their tire distributor. We decided to leave and take our chances. After all, we did have a spare wheel and tire mounted on the trailer just in case something might happen.

The first leg of our journey from Panama City started on a two lane blacktop road heading north that eventually connected to Interstate I-10, the east/west interstate across northern Florida. Interstate I-10 would then take us east to Jacksonville where we would pick up I-95 that headed north and home. I drove slowly and very carefully. We stopped often to check wheel bearing temperatures, the status of the tie down straps on the Montgomery 15, making certain that all were tight and working properly before proceeding.

After driving the first 50 miles with everything OK we reached the On ramp to Interstate I-10 heading east to Jacksonville. As our confidence in the new trailer and in the trailer tires increased, so did our driving speed. We had started driving at about 40mph on the two lane blacktop highway but our speed slowly climbed to 50mph and then to 55mph driving on Interstate I-10. By the time we reached Jacksonville, Florida, we were traveling at 60mph. From Jacksonville, heading north on I-95, our speed kept creeping up incrementally. First we cruised along at 60mph. Then we had to pass a semi trailer rig that was heavily loaded going up a slight incline and we got up to 65mph. The miles kept rolling by driving through Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. We spent a night at a motel.

Everything with the boat and trailer was OK. The tie down straps were tight. There was no chafing of the straps. The boat rode well on the trailer. By the time we reached Washington, DC, and I dropped John off at

his house, we were cruising at the same speed as all the other traffic on the interstate. The VW-GTI hardly knew it was towing the M15. The car, boat and trailer combination, after the first 1,200 highway miles together, were happy. So were we. It had been a trouble free trip to Glastonbury.

Home again, it was time for a more leisurely and detailed examination of the new toy that I had bought and everything that came with it. I unloaded the contents of the M15. With the mattresses out of the cabin I found three large, easily accessible storage areas located under the berths. There was even more usable and accessible storage space under the end of the cockpit. There was storage space available at the ends of the berths where we could stow things like a bag of clothing. The port sail locker went to the bottom of the hull. The starboard locker had a shallow molded tray for smaller items.

The Honda 2hp, four cycle engine was in excellent shape and seemed to be almost brand new. Both sails were almost new. The lapstrake hull had no dings or scratches. Reinstalling the mattresses, I suddenly realized that the Admirable and I now had a lovely, wide, comfortable king sized bed. The porta pottie at the aft end of the mattresses was covered with a plywood cover and a mattress filler piece was fitted, that enlarged the berth even more.

The M15 was a keel/centerboarder. The very deep mahogany rudder blade could be lifted when the water became shallow. It had a very clever mechanical linkage arrangement so that raising the tiller would cause the rudder to swing up to the horizontal position. It certainly gave every impression of being a "proper" sailboat.

Since it was still early spring, it was much too soon to head for Lake Champlain and "sea trials." The first thing I did was to replace the existing trailer tires with new radial car tires, removing the still nagging worry of will I have a tire failure on the highway? The radial tires also provided a much softer ride for the boat.

As owners of a new boat we naturally had to turn it into "our" boat, following our usual procedure by equipping the boat as we wanted it. Another fortuitous Saturday Tag Sale provided me with the smallest size Fortress anchor, with chain and rode, to use as a storm anchor. It was buried in the forward storage compartment. A small narrow plastic milk carton crate became the storage container for the regular anchor and anchor rode in the port sail locker. I bought a small cleaning pail and cleaning materials.

Charles Mathews had written in his *Messing About in Boats* articles that he had built a 19" toolbox galley that he had used on his M15 during his cruises. I wrote to Charles asking for more construction details of his galley and Charles very kindly sent me photos of his toolbox and its contents. It was a very elegant solution for a small compact galley on a boat like the M15. I started to build one. After all, everything that might be needed in the galley was then contained in the 19" toolbox and the toolbox disappeared in the storage space under the cockpit sole.

One of the unintended consequences of owning a sailboat is that we continually discover problems with the boat that need improving. We develop the ability to dream up all kinds of new solutions and learn how to solve boat specific problems. Our mind suddenly works on a new and entirely dif-

ferent plane. Big, clunky, volume hogging items have no place on a boat because of space, weight and volume constraints. What are needed are small, compact, easily stowed pieces of multi use equipment. The goal is to have one piece of equipment that can be used for at least two different applications. Volume on small boats is too precious to be filled with inappropriate gear.

Boat(s) teach us to think differently and we have found that this same form of thinking also carries over to our stationary home where optimum space utilization really isn't a big problem. However, clever boat ideas work just as well at home in the big galley. Building a toolbox galley was an example of the type of thinking process we, as boat owners, gradually develop. It was a lot of fun thinking through and analyzing what we really needed on board and why. It was tailored to our eating preferences.

I had to locate the individual items we felt were necessary and then play a three dimensional puzzle game so that the items finally all fitted inside the available volume of the 19" plastic toolbox.

Nesting plastic coffee cups came from a British Airways flight from Oslo, Norway, to Berlin, Germany. The "Put and Take" Section of the Glastonbury Transfer Station (the town dump) provided me with some square plastic picnic plates that stacked neatly and just fit inside the width of the tool box. I also found a small Revere water kettle with a broken whistle spout mechanism (the rivet holding the parts together had fallen out), brought it home and, after about ten minutes work in my shop, had it functioning again. A small pot nested in a stainless salad bowl that nested in a frying pan, which solved cooking and dish washing problems.

A Goodwill store supplied stainless steel knives, forks, spoons, the stainless steel salad mixing bowl, a paring knife, a nice small chef's knife and a mini can opener for an outlay of about \$3. Nesting plastic salad bowls that fitted inside the pot took care of salads, soup for lunch or could be used for breakfast cereal or for dessert. Two plastic wine glasses and a corkscrew were there, too.

After a bit of work in my shop, I built a 1/4" thick birch plywood cutting board/work surface that acted as a cover for the lower half of the toolbox. I also made a clear plastic cutting board to fit inside the top lid. It was held in place by bungee cords so that the toolbox lid volume could be fully utilized, the contents neatly contained but in full view. When it was finished we had every item we might need to cook for two people in the toolbox galley. It even contained tiny salt and pepper shakers, a small sugar container and a small squirt bottle of dishwashing detergent that was enough to last for about two weeks, plus a dish towel.

Here in Connecticut we have some lovely stores called Ocean State Job Lots. We never know what we might find there, but on one visit I found a restaurant style square tabletop one burner propane stove in a small case. It was ideal for the M15. The stove was totally self contained. It had piezo electric ignition and, when shut off, the propane canister was disconnected from the stove. It was easy to stow and the hot propane flame made cooking a pleasure.

The toolbox galley was not only highly practical for its intended purpose on board the M15 but later, recognizing its usefulness, we also took it along whenever we went on

longer car trips. We have used it for eating elegant luncheons at rest stop picnic tables on the interstates. We have made breakfast in our hotel or motel rooms and it is a great piece of emergency equipment to have available in case we lost electrical power during summer thunder, or winter ice, storms, in Connecticut.

Our toolbox galley and propane stove are self contained and, by adding our old kerosene cabin light from *Fun Too*, we have survived both winter and summer power outages in relative luxury.

Slowly our new Montgomery 15, now also named *Leppo*, came together. It's always an amazing sight for me to see all the equipment that a fully equipped boat needs when it is piled up on the garage floor. The obvious things like anchors (two) anchor chains and rode, mooring lines, fenders and the means to hold them in place on the hull, a fender board, a boat hook and a paddle in case the outboard doesn't want to run.

Then we need spare fuel containers (remember to fill them), drinking water containers (filled), sleeping bags, pillows, an FM radio for entertainment, a marine VHF radio for weather information and to communicate with others on the water, flashlights, a tool box with tools, plus an assortment of the spare parts that might be needed, clevis pins, cotter pins, locking rings and what about a sail repair kit so that line ends can be properly whipped and a spare spark plug for the outboard?

We also need a compass, binoculars, clothing, sun hats and caps and the list goes on and on. What about cockpit cushions? PFDs? Or a swim ladder to get back onboard the boat, a yacht ensign for the stern, the Goose Island Cruising Club burgee on a pig stick at the top of the mast (add a flag halyard to the mast for that)? Do we have a horn on board? How about a Bimini top as sun protection for the cockpit while eating lunch, or taking a snooze in a secluded cove?

Do the mainsail and the working jib have tell tales so that we can check for correct sail trim while sailing? Don't forget to get a wind vane for the top of the mast. Do we have nautical charts of our intended sailing area on board? Does the trailer tool box have all the correct size wrenches and equipment needed to work on the trailer? Do we have a small volt/ohmmeter to check out the trailer electrical wiring system if the brake lights don't work?

How about a lug wrench extension so that potentially rusty lug nuts can be loosened easily if we have a flat tire? Don't forget a hydraulic bottle jack for the trailer and some 6"x6 3/4" plywood squares to act as a base for the jack if the soil was soft. And a can of WD40 to loosen rusted wheel nuts. How about a grease gun filled with grease for wheel bearings and for the Bearing Buddies?

Do we have a spare set of wheel bearings and grease seals, plus the necessary installation tools in the trailer tool box, just in case? Don't forget a lock for the trailer hitch. I took the boat and trailer to my local welding/trailer shop and had them install an 8' long trailer tongue extension to make boat launching and retrieving easier. It makes life a lot simpler rather than using the old anchor rode as we did initially.

By mid June we had finished making small changes and improvements to *Leppo*. We phoned the 1852 Inn in Essex, New York. Lil and Gusti had a room available for us. We loaded up our new M15 *Leppo*,

hooked the boat trailer to the VW-GTI and headed for Essex and to Lake Champlain. Driving west on the Massachusetts Turnpike we drove through the Berkshire Mountains, and then north from Albany, New York, on I-87 until we reached our turnoff to Essex. We hardly noticed or felt the weight of the M15 and trailer behind the GTI. Our cruising speed was 65mph to 70mph, along with all the other traffic.

In the morning we headed for the ramp at Willsboro, raised our mast and rigged the boat for the first time and then, using our new trailer tongue extension, put the trailer in the water, but not the car. Finally, our M15 *Leppo* was afloat in the strange new fresh waters of Lake Champlain.

Our maiden voyage under sail began with the wind on the nose. We had to tack for four miles out of Willsboro Bay to reach Lake Champlain itself. It was tack after tack, from shore to shore. With the centerboard down, the Montgomery 15 immediately demonstrated that it knew how a real sailboat was expected to perform. It pointed high, tacking within 90°, made very little leeway hard on the wind while being extremely responsive to minute tiller inputs. Almost instantly, after the first few tacks, it showed me that it had been designed by someone who was a master of his profession.

After my first hour at the tiller the M15 had not only met, but had already exceeded all the performance comments I had received from various Montgomery owners via the internet. They hadn't been exaggerating about its sailing qualities in the least. Now I began to understand why the man I had originally called, "just had to have an M15 again" or the man in Sacramento whose boat I wanted to buy, "loved it so much he decided to keep it" had felt. I, too, found it to be a superb little ship that handled beautifully.

Rounding the northern tip of the Willsboro peninsula and entering the widest part of Lake Champlain, I could now try out other points of sailing, close reaches and beam reaches, as we headed south towards Essex. *Leppo* was in her element. Katharina and I sat in the cockpit grinning at each other. We had finally found, and lucked into another wonderful little boat. After this first hour of sailing we felt we owned a pint sized version of our old Tripp-Lentsch. It had almost identical sailing characteristics and feel as our Tripp-Lentsch.

Leaving the Burlington, Vermont, area astern around noon, Katharina, using the contents of the toolbox galley, made lunch for the first time. I had built a cockpit dining table in my shop that filled the width of the companionway. It was designed for use while we were underway. The support legs for the table were hinged and had slots that fit over the lowest hatch board. The legs folded flat for storage. The table itself had fiddles around the upper edges. As we sailed south on Lake Champlain we enjoyed our first meal onboard, dining in old *Fun Too* style while *Leppo*, per GPS reading, was romping along doing 4.5 knots. When we had finished lunch the toolbox galley was stowed out of sight beneath the cockpit sole. More goodness.

With the table stowed again, Katharina decided it was time to try out the berth in the cabin and take a little post luncheon snooze. She stretched out on the lee berth, put a pillow under her head and with the gentle muted sounds of water whispering along the sides of the lapstrake hull, fell asleep. When she awoke half an hour later she declared that the

sleeping accommodations on the M15 were excellent. They were very comfortable and on a par with those of *Fun Too*. Now that was high praise indeed.

She came into the cockpit and then stretched out full length on the lee cockpit cushion to absorb a bit of sunshine. The cockpit seat was just the right length for her and she drifted off to sleep again. The M15, after this first short trial sail, had most definitely become a "keeper." What a great feeling it was to have a boat that worked well from the sailing characteristics to living accommodations and all the stowage capabilities.

Several hours later we arrived at Essex Shipyard, having exercised all points of sailing, hard on the wind, beam reaching and broad reaching. The wind speed had varied enough during our trip to Essex so that we had been able to give *Leppo* a good workout. Sailing in many different wind and wave conditions during the following days just reinforced our initial conclusions.

The Montgomery 15 was a great little sailing vessel, close winded, responsive and very comfortable. It was also a very dry boat, as we discovered when strong winds were blowing and we sailed, well heeled, through several large wake waves of the Essex ferry. We didn't get any spray in our faces.

The Honda 2hp four cycle outboard motor drove *Leppo* at hull speed at half throttle and ran very quietly. It was more goodness. We towed our Nymph dinghy behind the M15 with very little drag. It was another good "big" boat/dinghy combination.

Mornings, the lazy summer wind usually slept late at lovely Lake Champlain. It would only wake up and decide to come to work around 11am and would then called it a day by 6pm. Union rules! I would use the morning's flat calm to row for miles in the Nymph dinghy, examining the lakeside houses, noting that most had a pipe running into the lake that served as the drinking water supply line for the house. If I was lucky I might see deer drinking at the edge of the lake or a skunk taking its youngsters out to show them the world, a raccoon who hadn't gone to bed yet, or fish in the shallows guarding their nests and their hatchlings. Katharina would often go for a long walk or visit a Swedish textile artist friend she had met during our previous visits to Essex.

Around 11am, as the wind awoke from its nightly slumber and reported for work, we would head out for a sail and spend the rest of the day using nature's dependable Aeolian motor to sail over to the Vermont side of the lake, exploring the many bays, coves and small uninhabited islands that we found there. With the Nymph dinghy in tow we could anchor close to small rocky tree covered islands, row ashore and go exploring. Sometimes we would anchor in a nice secluded cove, set up the Bimini, stretch out in the cockpit reading a book and enjoy the stillness that Lake Champlain offered.

One day towards the end of our vacation, I lifted the port mattress to get something from the storage locker under the berth and found the locker half filled with water. Where did the water come from? How did it get there? There was no water to be seen anywhere inside the boat itself. I pumped the water out of the locker, then checked the starboard locker and found the same amount of water there as well. I pumped some more. By the time I had finished, I had pumped out several quarts of water from each of the two lockers.

We had had a few robust, hard on the wind lake crossings with water squirting up through the centerboard pennant hole into the cockpit. I had solved the squirting problem by putting a small piece of sponge in the pennant hole. In order to determine how the water had gotten into the lockers, I decided to careen the M15 at the dock to simulate the heeling angles we had while sailing and see if duplicating the heel angle would show me where and how the water was entering the storage locker. I put the mattresses on the dock.

Katharina, who was standing on the dock, took the main halyard and pulled the M15 over slowly, a little bit at a time, until we reached the angle of heel we had had during our various sails. My head was inside the port cabin storage locker watching for a sign of water when I saw a thin stream of water start flowing into the locker through a small unsealed part of the cabin inner liner. The first problem was solved. Now I knew how the water got into that locker.

We turned *Leppo* around at the dock and tried the same test on the starboard side. It was another aha! moment. Water came into that locker at exactly the same spot and at the same heel angle as on the port side. When we returned to Glastonbury a new hunt started to find the elusive water entrance hole. After some email correspondence with the designer and original builder of the M15, Jerry Montgomery, exchanging ideas of where the leak might be found, he pointed me in a direction that greatly narrowed down my search area. He told me that in a few of the boats they built, the cockpit and cabin fiberglass moldings hadn't been bonded to the hull as well as they should have been.

To locate the exact leak source, I decided to pressurize the inside of the boat, using my big shop vacuum cleaner outlet port as the source for pressurized air. A sheet of Styrofoam was used to make a new one-piece hatch board with a hole in it to fit the large diameter hose nozzle of my shop vacuum cleaner. Every gap where air could leak out, the edges of the companionway hatch, sides of the hatch boards and the sail locker lids, were then completely sealed using lots of duct tape.

With the shop vac running and pressurizing the inside of the M15, I painted soap bubble fluid around all suspected areas of the joints between the upper edge of the centerboard trunk and the cockpit drain. I didn't have to wait very long until a nice stream of large continuous bubbles was forming at the suspected area. I marked the spots needing repairs. Additional testing at other potentially suspect areas resulted in no bubbles. Those areas were all properly sealed.

The most difficult part of the job was now accomplished. The actual leak source had been located and identified. All that remained was for Dr Benneck to perform a bit of fiberglass surgery, widening the spot next to the centerboard pennant hole where I had to make my repairs. I ground out the area around the leaking seam to make certain that when I filled it with thickened epoxy, the whole area would be sealed. After completing the repair, I gave the hull another pressurization test. There were no more bubbles anywhere. We never had another drop of water inside the boat for as long as we owned *Leppo*.

Many more yearly vacations were happily spent sailing at Essex, New York, and on Lake Champlain. On one vacation a 45' sailboat was moored alongside the inner break-

wall of the Essex Shipyard harbor. We were moored at a short finger pier perpendicular to the breakwall and close to his bow. The owner of the big sailboat would stand on his bow anchor platform looking down at us sitting contentedly in our M15 cockpit, reading or working.

One day he came over to talk with us, wanting to know more about our M15. He told us that he could only go sailing with his big boat if he had three experienced people along as crew, but he was intrigued with our Montgomery 15 which was about the size as his inflatable tender hanging from davits at his stern. He thought the Montgomery 15 would be an ideal sailboat for the lake north of Montreal, where he lived. Then he could go sailing every evening all by himself. As we had discovered with our Northeast 38 purchase, bigger isn't necessarily better.

Occasionally someone owning a high powered Cigarette with a white hull that had a large flying duck painted on its sides would come screaming up the lake from Port Henry or maybe even from Fort Ticonderoga, heading for Burlington, disturbing the tranquility of Lake Champlain. Minutes before he could be spotted you could hear the thunderous roar of his straight exhaust pipes, the noise echoing back and forth from the Adirondack to the Green Mountains in a reverberating cacophony of horrid raucous Cigarette noise. Far down the lake we would finally spot a white boat, our noise maker, moving along the Vermont shore at a high rate of speed.

When he disappeared from sight in the direction of Burlington, his high decibel noise maker changed pitch, the Doppler effect, as he continued letting our ears know just how important he was and how fast he could go. Other sailors standing on the docks at Essex Shipyard listening to this aural pollution attack thought that it would be nice if New York State would extend the duck hunting season and allow the use of big bore market guns for this very specific breed of obscenely noisy white Cigarette duck. But other than this single disturber of the peace, life and sailing on Lake Champlain was wonderful. It had become our new tranquil sailing paradise. But...

After sailing and exploring our new paradise for several years we now were familiar with the nooks, bays and islands in a large radius around our Essex home port. We had eaten in restaurants in the whole area. We had visited and walked through Ausable Chasm. We had been to Plattsburg, New York, by car and to Burlington, Vermont, by ferry on days when there had been too much wind or it had rained. On one too windy day we had driven to Lake Placid and explored that town as well. Even though we were sailing in paradise, eventually a small seed of a thought began germinating in our mind that asked; wouldn't you like to see if there are other nice paradises to explore as well?

One year we thought we would try sailing on Lake George again. It had been such a lovely quiet place when I had last visited it in my foldboat. As we drove along the Lake George shoreline, passing marina after marina, with every marina full of motor boats with hardly a mast in sight we just kept on driving to Essex and the guaranteed quiet of Lake Champlain.

Moosehead Lake Sailing

That was the reason why, on another summer, we decided to head for Moose-

head Lake in Maine, to sail and explore a new area. What we found there was another huge wilderness paradise for trailer sailors. The Moosehead Lake shoreline was far more primitive than Lake Champlain. There were only two small towns on the lake. The major one, Greenville, was at the southern end of the lake and another, Rockwood, was halfway up the western shore. There were miles and miles of forests, very few houses and our only companions on the water were a tiny number of fishermen trolling for fish at slow and almost noiseless speeds. It was another sailor's idea of heaven.

In the town of Rockwood we had rented a small cabin and everyone there, knowing that we were strangers in town, repeatedly warned us to be very careful of moose crossing the roads evenings. We had heard so much about moose that we wanted to see some honest to goodness real live moose, too. We drove out to highly recommended moose observation areas on several evenings during prime moose watching hours (so the locals told us) but we never saw a moose. Maybe they were on vacation also.

On one far too windy day we weren't about to go sailing. We had walked all around and had explored Rockwood, we had already explored the art galleries at Greenville. A look at our road maps showed that we were very close to the Canadian border and to the City of Quebec. OK, let's drive there and spend the day visiting Quebec. So another "no sailing" day was spent driving to Quebec, a real French city, going sightseeing and enjoying our neighbor's Canadian ambience and French cuisine. Such are the hardships that a trailer sailor must often endure. The vagaries of weather play havoc with sailing plans so we had to look for something else to do.

While sailing our various trailerable sailboats we have been forced to endure the sight of manatees and porpoises swimming alongside us in Florida, we have seen alligators basking on the shore, we have endured wonderful solitude with only loon calls breaking the stillness and enchantment of the moment in Maine, we have met new 18 wheeler Big Rig friends while "highway sailing on the interstates," we even discovered areas unknown to most little four wheel drivers and ourselves until we pulled into a giant truck stop and went exploring their facilities.

Truck stops didn't have any pumps with gasoline but they had showers, sleeping rooms, restaurants, movies and large stores selling all kinds of truck accessories. They also sold food and other necessities in small convenient sized packages that would be ideal for sailors as well. Why is there no cross pollination between truck stop items like small coffee pots, toasters, curling irons, and other accessories that run on 12 volts, as well as food sold in small portions with the boating community? Sailor's needs are very similar to those of truck drivers who are hauling loads cross country while living in their truck cabins.

Lake Pocotopaug

While canoeing in Connecticut I had discovered Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton, which was about a 20 minute drive from our home in Glastonbury. I found a small marina there where I could get dock space for *Leppo* after we had come back from our summer sailing trips on Lake Champlain. On Saturdays and Sundays Lake Pocotopaug was churned to a white froth by all the PWCs

and outboard motorboats towing water skiers around and around the two islands in the lake, but from early August to mid October, from Monday to Friday afternoons, it too offered a spot for quiet relaxed sailing.

Now our trailer sailing system gave us everything we wanted as sailors. During the week I could drive to East Hampton and be out sailing in about half an hour. If we wanted to go further afield we could put *Leppo* on the trailer at Lake Pocotopaug, load up *Leppo* at home with any needed additional equipment or provisions and be off to Lake Champlain, the Chesapeake, Florida, or anywhere else that struck our fancy.

Living at B&Bs at our destinations meant we had good beds, the convenience of a toilet and a shower, plus the excellent breakfasts that they all served. We didn't have to worry any more about sudden wind shifts or anchors dragging during the night. We would go sailing during the day. Evenings we would try out local restaurants and sample their regional specialties.

Katharina, my First Mate, had now been given a promotion in rank. She was now officially The Admirable. She found our new trailer sailing life far superior to our previous sailing life living, cooking and housekeeping on our larger boats. Now sailing was a pleasure offering a much greater variety of places to visit, without all the attendant work of cooking, cleaning and housekeeping on board.

Owning a boat like the Montgomery 15 meant I could add improvements or make modifications the easy way. The boat was "moored outside" next to our garage, or it could be brought into the garage where tools, extension cords and a well equipped shop with raw materials were instantly available and not an hour's drive away at a shoreside marina. Any work I wanted to do could be done rapidly, conveniently and with a roof over my head so that weather didn't interfere with my work.

After sailing the Montgomery 15 by myself for a while, I decided that I preferred to sit as far forward in the cockpit as possible but the original M15 tiller was too short to do this easily. So I built a new, longer tiller and added a tiller extension. Now I could sit all the way forward in the cockpit. This gave me better fore and aft trim of the M15 and I could now sail without submerging the transom in the water which added drag because of improper weight distribution. I added some self steering devices, sheet to tiller steering and a tiller holder, so that I could go below to get something while *Leppo* would hold her course.

Since we didn't have a galley workspace inside the cabin, I had to build a galley working area in the cockpit. I added some wooden cleats to the bottom of the plywood filler piece between the berths, which then fit between the cockpit seats at the aft end of the cockpit. This gave us a large, non sliding working area for food preparation and for cooking. The cleats kept the work surface firmly in place between the cockpit seats.

I built a Bimini top so that we could sail on sunny days without getting sunburned. It also served to keep the rain out of the cockpit galley area while cooking or dining. The large volume of space under the shallow starboard sail locker was inaccessible because the shallow locker was molded as an integral part of the cockpit. On a 15' boat we needed every last bit of storage volume we could get, so I had to create a way to access the space below the shallow sail locker.

To reach that space I carefully cut around the middle of the flat edge of the shallow tray rim and removed it. I epoxied supports inside the locker that could hold the tray in its original position. Rope handles at each end of the shallow tray allowed me to lift it out easily which gave me access to all the storage volume below the tray while still being able to use the tray for small items, sail stops, boat padlocks, the car keys and a few tools. This modification added lots of additional usable volume. This modification allowed me to stow the Bimini top, extra PFDs, cockpit cushions, the swim ladder, the emergency paddle and a fire extinguisher there.

While sailing by myself, when the Admirable was not on board to hand me something, I found that I needed a place to store my binoculars, my small Grundig AM/FM radio, my GPS and my Marine VHF radio so that they wouldn't slide around on the cockpit seats and possibly fall into the cockpit sole when the M15 was heeled by an unexpected wind gust. I bought the largest and longest teak binocular holder I could find but then it turned out to be still too short for my intended purpose.

I took it downstairs to my shop, looked through all my accumulated tools until I finally unearthed my teak binocular holder stretcher (doesn't every well equipped shop have such a specialty tool available). With the teak stretcher, plus some ingenuity, I was soon able to add several inches to the middle of the holder, expanding the width of the unit.

When I had finished stretching my teak rack it completely replaced the lowest hatch board in the companionway spanning the whole width of the companionway entrance. Now my 7x50 binoculars, the GPS receiver, the small Grundig radio, the handheld Marine VHF radio and my beverage holder were firmly held in place regardless of wave action or of heel angle. A small shelf to hold my eyeglasses and/or my sunglasses just inside the companionway where they would be instantly reachable was also needed. It was another small shop project.

The sail locker lids didn't have watertight seals nor locks to keep the lids from opening in the event of a knockdown while sailing. I installed closed cell foam gaskets and added lock hasps with three small ABUS padlocks all keyed the same. That way, one key opened the companionway hatch and also opened the two padlocks for the sail lockers. Keep life simple!

Now the boat was totally watertight. In the event of a knockdown or a rollover we might get a tiny bit of water below via the louver slots in the top companionway hatch board, but otherwise the ship was watertight. When sailing hard on the wind and going through waves the cockpit drain squirted water into the cockpit which occasionally got our feet wet. This required some sort of a "squirt stopper" in the opening. I fabricated a teak block that fit in the centerboard pennant opening that had a hole in the middle for the centerboard pennant. It blocked water from squirting through the centerboard hole/cockpit drain into the cockpit. That worked nicely. The slight sideways pressure of the centerboard pennant through the hole held the block firmly in place.

Gradually our Montgomery 15, *Leppo*, evolved to become a wonderfully comfortable, responsive sailing vessel that we enjoyed for many years and had many happy sailing, and road adventures.



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Montgomery 15

Specifications

LOA 15'0"
LWL 13'3"
Beam 6'2"
Sail Area 122sf
Draft Board Up 15"
Draft Board Down 2'1/2"
Weight 750lbs
Ballast 275lbs
Centerboard Weight 40lbs
Mast Height Above Waterline 22'3"

Hull

Hand Laminated Fiberglass Construction
Combination Keel/Centerboard Design
Internal Molded Ballast
Retractable Fiberglass Centerboard
Self righting
Positive Foam Flotation
Molded Gelcoat Contrasting Sheer Strake
Custom Outboard Motor Bracket

Deck

End grained Balsa Gored Deck
Through Bolted Hull to Deck Joint
Molded in Deck and Cockpit Non skid
Two Leakproof Tinted Cabin Windows
Fiberglass Sliding Companionway Hatch
Full Length Oiled Teak Toe Rails
Self bailing Cockpit
Full Contoured Cockpit Coamings
Two Scuppered Cockpit Lockers

Rigging and Fittings

Laminated Mahogany and Ash Tiller, Varnished
Mahogany Kick up Rudder, Varnished
Hard Anodized Black Mooring Cleats (3)
Stainless Steel Mast Step
Swivel Cam cleat Mainsheet Cleat
Clear Anodized Mast and Boom
1/8" 1x19 Stainless Steel Shrouds
Through bolted Stainless Steel Stem and Chain Plates
Wire to rope Main Halyard
Slab (Jiffy) Reefing
Mainsail, 3.8 oz Dacron with Set of Reef Points and Class Insignia
Jib 3.8 oz Dacron
Dacron Yacht Braid Main and Jib Sheets

Interior

Fully Finished with Gelcoat
Two Person V-Berth
3" Thick Vinyl Covered Foam Cushions
Molded in Retaining Well for a Self contained Head
Storage Under Berths

Weird Experiences

Twice when I was on the *Agassiz* back in New Jersey we had some weird experiences. The first one occurred when we were cruising many miles offshore when word came down for all hands to come topside. We had no idea what was going on. When we got there the skipper told us to look to the west where we could see the Steel Pier in Atlantic City.

We were all knew what we were seeing because we had once spent a few nights anchored a half mile off this pier on warm summer nights enjoying binocular liberty. We couldn't go ashore so the next best thing was to grab a pair of binoculars and watch all the young ladies parading by. Yes, we all knew that spot.

But now we were 40 miles offshore! How could we possibly see it well over the horizon! I still don't understand how these mirages work but there it was, Ferris wheels and the whole bit.

The second one was on one of those perfect nights at sea when everything is going well. The *Agassiz* was on a mission. We had a disabled fisherman on a long tow and were headed back to port. The water was about as warm as it would get that year and our bow wave was lighting itself up somehow. The OD said that it was phosphorescence. I guess I had heard of it but it was the first time I had ever seen it. "It happens every summer," he said.

I was fascinated by it. A couple of dolphins were now swimming alongside and they lit up the water, leaving a ghostly light around themselves.

All too soon I had to go onto the towing watch. One of the duties on that watch was to keep the towing bitt wet. We had a bucket on a long rope that we would throw over the side and haul up pails full of water to throw on the bitt. The bitt got well watered that night because every time I threw a bucket of water on it, it would light up like a Fourth of July sparkler, so I kept on throwing water because I wanted to see more of the show.

I later learned that this happened because microorganisms in the ocean by the billions at this time of year glow when they are disturbed. I have since seen it a few times but none matched the wonder of that first summer night all aglow.

The African Queen

Towards the end of my stay in New Jersey we were called up on very short notice to travel down to Ocean City, Maryland. This was way down at the southern end of our area. The word we got was that a large tanker, the *African Queen*, had gone aground and broken up. No, not the one in that movie, it was safely ashore at Key Largo.

We spent all night getting there and when we arrived on the scene there was a helicopter rescue going on getting the crew off the ship, the first I had ever seen. We had orders to stand by while some legal things got settled. The ship, a large one by 1958 standards, was considered a super tanker, today it would be considered a Panamax. It was insured by Lloyds of London. They wanted one of their employees onboard to watch things as long as they now owned the ship.

We traveled around the ship a couple of times while we waited, traveling through a large oil slick while doing so. That oil could become a big problem for Lloyds and they were quick to pay off before any of the oil got onto the beaches of this tourist town. After that payoff it was no longer their responsibility and the ship was open for salvage.

Sea Stories & Tall Tales

By Mississippi Bob

So we went back to Cape May and docked there, but not for long. About a week later we got called out again, this time the word was that there was a shooting war going on over the salvage. When we arrived back at the wreck there was nobody onboard and it wasn't the same ship that we had left the week before. The lifeboats were all gone and so was everything else of great value. The local fishermen had a field day stripping a lot of valuable stuff off this once proud ship.

We went back once more and found that the bow section had turned up missing, it had floated off somewhere and probably sank. The rest of the ship looked so different. The portholes were mostly missing and the proud *African Queen* was now a derelict, sad to see.

I never saw the ship again but I followed what was happening from my new duty station in Texas. The best I could learn was that a couple of yard workers from Newport News decided that they could salvage the ship and they did. These were poor young working guys with more ambition than brains. They financed their salvage by selling parts that the fishermen had not already taken.

They finally got it floating and had it towed into Newport News where they now had to pay dock fees that were eating up their funds. They sold the ship to the salvage yard where they had worked. They got a year's wages for their efforts, it took them a year to do it. The same guys were possibly on the crew that cut it up. The only people who made out really well were the fishermen who did the early salvage.

One Busy Year

1961 was a year of much change for me. January found me on the Coast Guard Cutter *Lantana* in Owensboro, Kentucky, her temporary homeport for the winter. We had a lot of liberty and I used mine well. I met a young mother who I could get serious about, but all too soon the boat headed back to its usual homeport in Iowa.

We kept the affair going through the mail. Then I got transferred to the Main Inspection Office in Cincinnati. I had bought a car while in Iowa and drove there. I got paid mileage. I became the seaman on a 30 footer in Cincinnati Harbor. Here there were no quarters or chow hall so we got put on "Subsistence and Quarters" with extra pay to fend for ourselves. I rented a room across the river in Newport, Kentucky, walking distance from our boat and our office downtown.

The boat crew worked every weekend and had time off mid week. Owensboro was a couple of hours away and I began to see my lady and things got serious when she got the ring. I brought her up to Newport to help find an apartment. We found one that rented by the week and paid for the week. Neither of us was happy living there.

The engineer on our crew suggested that we think about a trailer. He lived in one with his wife and kids. All too soon I bought a trailer and had it delivered and set up on a lot next to the engineer's family. Things were getting serious, maybe it was time to get married. The Fourth of July was coming up soon. I couldn't get time off that week-

end, we were needed on the boat so we set a date on my next mid week off. We got married in her hometown, gathered up all of her stuff, including one daughter, and headed back to Cincinnati.

The girls got along well as neighbors. Neither family was rolling in money so we learned real quickly to do things that helped out. We did our shopping at the Dayton Air Force Base Commissary. Both wives would go with one husband while the other would stay at home and babysit all the kids. They wives would return with enough groceries to last a couple of weeks. It really helped our marriage get off to a good start having the right neighbors.

The summer went by quickly and all too soon we had one last job to do for the Marine Inspection Office. We were assigned to patrol a boat race at Madison, Indiana, for a long weekend and then return the boat to the CG base at St Louis for reassignment. This was the first time my bride and I were separated for more than a day. That trip took over two weeks and I had no idea where headquarters would send me next.

When we delivered the boat I was back into the military. Our skipper disappeared, no idea where he went. The engineer went back to his last unit and I was only hoping. I was called into the personnel office and asked where I would like to go. Six years in the service and this was the first time I ever was asked where I would like to go. I told them I had a wife and daughter in Owensboro, Kentucky, living with her family, would that be a possibility?

I was told there was no need for another seaman at that base but there was an opening on the *Sunac* at the buoy tender base there. Bingo, we were home. I caught a bus back to Owensboro where I met my wife with the car. We found a spot in a trailer park near the base, then drove back to Cincinnati to arrange to have our trailer moved.

1961 was a good year. I sent the remainder of the year on the Cutter *Sunac* doing much the same stuff we had done on the *Lantana* at the start of the year. One very big difference, however, was that I was now a brown bagger, I let the younger guys have my liberties on trips and I got more liberty at home with my family.

One of my sons gave me a T shirt for Christmas a year ago. It is my favorite. It shows a road leading into a forest. Big letters on it say, "No Map, No Compass, Just Go." The story of my life. I am still married to that lady, that young mother who I met in 1961.

Barge Aground

My new bride and I were just settling in for the evening in our trailer at its new location when there came a knock at the door. It was the captain's son who told me that his dad would pick me up in 15 minutes because we were headed back to the boat. This was my second duty station since we had married, back on a buoy tender stationed in her home town of Owensboro, Kentucky.

We lived in the same trailer park so there was no escape. On the way to the boat the captain filled me in on what was so important. A gasoline barge had run over the lower guide wall on a lock downriver. We got underway with a short crew and he left word for anyone who showed up for work in the morning about where the boat had gone. He also left word at the base to round up all the guys they could and drive them down to the lock that was in trouble.

We had several locks to pass through downriver getting to where we were headed so it was well into the morning when we got there. We had word from that lock that a group of our guys had showed up. The skipper had asked them if they had any brush axes and saws that they could loan to our guys and when he got an affirmative reply said to tell them to walk up the riverbank and clear out any brush by the light just above the lock. We would pick them up when we got there.

When we arrived we found the air filled with gasoline fumes. It seemed like it could all go off at any moment. We had turned off the smoking lamp a couple of miles back. We picked up the rest of our crew and nosed into the Kentucky shore a half mile upstream. There wasn't a whole lot that we could do but stand by. The skipper of the gas tow had moved all of his other barges downriver a long way and parked them out in the boonies tied to some trees.

The river was high but not high enough to lower the wickets to have an open river. The water was about a foot below the top of the wall. The lead barge had run up over the wall and tore its bottom out for about 100'. The tow boat crew was busy facing up on the barge and another crew was on the wall foaming it down in the hope that there would be no sparks flying when they pulled the barge off.

It got very tense when it came time to try to move the barge, but it slid off with no sparks so things relaxed. We went down and landed on the upper guide wall to return the tools and our captain went ashore to talk with

the lockmaster for information that he would need to write up his report that had to follow this incident. Our return trip was uneventful, we did move a couple of buoys and brushed out a couple of shore lights and were back with our families in a few days.

The Mystery Slaying A River Tale

On a typical summer duty day in 1961 we were out in our Coast Guard 30 footer at the upper end of Cincinnati Harbor handing out info about displaying the newly required registration numbers. We spotted one boat that looked to be overloaded, a 14' open run-about with about eight people aboard. We hailed them over and asked to see their life jackets (pre PFD days). The owner said he had a bunch of them but had left them in his car to make room for his passengers. He got a ticket.

Late in the afternoon we got a call on our radio that someone was missing and presumed drowned on the Little Miami River, a tributary of the Ohio on the Ohio side of the river. We headed over, it was not far away, where we met the guys who had reported him missing. They told us that they went for a swim but their friend couldn't swim so he stayed with their boat to guard the booze. When they returned to the boat he was missing. They showed us where they had anchored and we began our search at that point.

We had a body drag onboard, something we hoped we would never have to use. It was a 4' piece of pipe with sharp grapple hooks attached. On the side opposite the hooks it had a chain bridle to which a rope

was attached that was now in my hands. On our first pass I felt a bump so the skipper did a quick 180° and we started a second pass. Again I felt a bump as we passed the anchor spot so with another 180° we started on a third try.

On this third pass we connected with something, which the engineer helped me to pull to the surface. It was the body we were looking for, with one leg draped over the bar so we pulled him in that way. The body had several scratches but very little blood. We laid him on the cockpit deck and covered him with a rescue blanket. We called to find out where to take the body and were told the marina where we would meet the Kentucky police.

Kentucky police? I thought we were in Ohio. I learned that day that the waters of the Ohio and its tributaries up to the first bridge were part of Kentucky, so we met the police on shore in Ohio but they were Kentucky cops with a Kentucky ambulance. When we transferred the body to them our blanket came off just long enough to get theirs on him.

After this our day was winding down so we called it a day, the engineer and I rode back to the trailer park where we lived on side by side lots. That evening we were watching the 10 o'clock news with our wives (my bride and I did not yet have a TV) and telling them about our day when they began talking on the news about the mystery slaying that had happened that afternoon. Someone at the marina was a news reporter and he probably saw those scratches when we made that transfer. With a little imagination he had a story.



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Around the Shops

At Avery Point Boathouse

John Giulietti completed his stretched Gloucester Gull dory and launched it at Bushy Point with help from Phil Behney and a passing kayaker. Congratulations, John! It's bright yellow, you can't miss it.

Bill Armitage is now in the Shop reconditioning a beautiful strip planked Melonseed skiff soon to be turning heads on Long Pond this spring.

Next in line will be some maintenance on our club dories followed by a Good Little Skiff build.



John Giulietti readies to shove off for the first time with Phil Behney already aboard.

At Mystic Seaport Boathouse Livery and John Gardner Boat Shop

The Whitehall yacht tender *Captain Hook*, which now has a couple of new steam-bent frames and thorough paint restoration inside and out, is getting close to making it out the door.

Beetle Cats are getting their bow planking and frame connections strengthened as well as full putty and paint treatments. In the Livery *Sand* got her transom polished and made it out under cover to make room for the White Whitehall which was outside expanding her planks prior to the final caulking of her seams and final bottom paint. We're all thinking May and it is getting closer to Opening Day.



Vic Pantani and René Boelig apply the first of many copouts of gloss black on *Captain Hook*.



Welcome to
John Gardner
Traditional Small Craft Association

Visit us at the Community Boat House
Building #36
UConn Avery Point
1064 Shennecossett Rd
Groton, CT 06340

Local: www.JGTSCA.org
www.facebook.com/JGTSCA
National: www.TSCA.net



René Boelig and Dan Nelson apply fresh coat of bottom paint to Beetle Cat *Lisa*.



Ted Stanton applies final hardware to *Sand* before she goes out the door.

The Mystic Seaport Ship Modelers have been active this winter. Last year it was a working model of tug *Kingston* (the one outside at the South Entrance to the Museum). This year it is a submarine. Come join their activities upstairs in the John Gardner Boat Shop second Saturdays of the month. Bring a model or just come see what they are up to.



Hans Berger and the submarine

In 1973 I found a copy of Joseph E. Garland's *Lone Voyager* in my local library. There is much about the late '60s and early '70s which, for one reason or another, I cannot remember. I do have a very clear recollection of rereading the story of Howard Blackburn, the "Hero Fisherman of Gloucester," several times during what I prefer to call the "adventurous period" in my life. Blackburn's story of being abandoned during a winter storm and then rowing his Banks Dory for five days with his fingers frozen to the oars is a tribute to what the human spirit can endure. Truly a fantastic story but it did not end there. Blackburn went on to become a successful saloon keeper, philanthropist and solo Atlantic voyager. Many admire Howard



The Blackburn Challenge
A Journey Longer Than the "Miles Around"
Cape Ann

By Bill Armitage (2004)

Blackburn's accomplishments and dedication to his community.

I learned about the Blackburn Challenge in 2001 while surfing the internet looking for a used copy of Garland's book. Immediately I decided that the row around Gloucester was something that I had to do. Attainment of the goal required a plan. I have never considered myself to be a "rower." All of my prior experience involved pulling on heavy oars in even heavier boats while fishing in freshwater lakes and ponds.

The first order of business was to acquire a boat and learn to row. I teach middle school Technology Education so I decided to start by building something easy in the shop as an after school activity. I found a copy of

Building the Weekend Skiff by R. Butz and J. Montague at the Mystic Seaport bookstore. A few sheets of marine ply, bronze ring nails, epoxy and student help resulted in a stable little craft that could make four miles per hour. We christened her the *Mystic Dancer* after the place of her construction and Jimmy Buffett's flying boat.

She was a learning experience for me and my students. After a few weeks of rowing around a local pond I was ready to try something a bit more adventurous. *Lone Voyager* includes the story of Blackburn's trip on the Erie Canal. In the summer of 2001 I duplicated that portion of Howard's trip. After rowing more than 300 miles in 15 days two things were certain, I had the physical ability to row around Cape Ann and the *Mystic Dancer* was the wrong boat to do it in.

Chance can have a major impact on our lives. First, the local newspaper (*The New London Day*) did an article about my Erie Canal trip and my boat building at Mystic Middle School. The press caused a parent, Phil Behney, to invite me to stop by the boat-house of the John Gardner Chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association (JGTSCA). I met Russ Smith, the Chapter President. Russ has made the row around Cape Ann more than a dozen times. Russ' advice and encouragement prompted me to begin indoor rowing on a Concept 2 erg during the winter in an attempt to get myself in shape for the Blackburn Challenge.

The only issue left was finding a boat to row. My first inclination was to build one. I began to search the internet for an appropriate design which would be within the range of my skills. My research included *Wooden Boat*, lots of designer's websites and reviewing postings on bulletin boards. I made lots of great contacts from around the world and eventually settled on a wherry. Construction began in January 2002 and progressed slowly through the spring.

Fate has a way of smiling on me. During April I received an email from one of my earlier rowing contacts who lives in New Zealand, John Hitchcock. He was planning to come to the eastern US to visit family and wanted to know if he could take me up on my offer of getting together for a row. "Oh sure!! By the way, are you interested in doing the Blackburn Challenge?"

John's first response was to indicate that he would have to give it some thought. Two weeks later he let me know that he had done a 15 mile row and was going to begin training for the Blackburn. I started logging hours on the erg. The issue of getting a boat which could be a double was resolved when Russ offered the use of one from the JGTSCA fleet. Things were looking up.

July 5 found me standing at the ferry dock in New London wearing an orange shirt from Pineapple Willie's and a Hull Lifesaving Museum "Snow Row" cap. It is good to stand out in the crowd when you are meeting a total stranger. John arrived at the appointed time. We introduced ourselves and headed off to my home to get acquainted and share backgrounds. That evening we went to the JGTSCA boathouse at Avery Point, eating burgers and dogs and talking rowing with the regular crew. John gave the group a quick class on bending a Turk's Head to an oar for use as a button.

Saturday and Sunday were spent practice rowing together and making adjustments to thwart, oarlock and stretcher placement. Two days is not much time to build a team

but everything just seemed to click for us. Monday found John headed to Vermont to visit family friends and then on to the *Wooden Boat Festival* in Rockland, Maine. I took charge of the last minute supplies and a short task list. We would be ready.

The JGTSCA would be represented by two boats, John and I in the *Cheticamp 19* and Russ and Joe Toro in a Swampscott Dory. We met for lunch on Friday and then headed up to Gloucester. We bunked out with Russ' Uncle Wes, a spry Navy man who has retired to Gloucester. Wes gave us a driving tour of Cape Ann which would prove invaluable. In addition to the history of Cape Ann, Wes pointed out major structures which we could use to track our progress the following day. He also identified safe harbors should the need arise. The evening was topped off with a hearty pasta meal and a very shallow glass of wine.

Race Day arrived early, 5:15am with



heavy overcast and a mild breeze. An off-handed comment about wind this early in the day did not sit well with the newer rowers, me among them. Check in began at 6am and the rowers' meeting was held promptly at 7:30am. The weather called for winds from the north at 10-15 knots changing to the south later in the day with fog moving in.

Participants who had not made Halibut Point in three hours were advised to take out in Rockport Harbor and call in. The Cape Ann Rowing Club has the procedure down pat after running the event for so many years. Launching was quick and organized with plenty of parking available. Eight o'clock found us floating in the Annisquam River waiting for our group to be called to the start.

The first leg of the race is north on the river for about two miles. There were plenty of pleasure craft moored in the river and care had to be taken to avoid collision. The wind and tide were against us but we were fresh and excited. A decision had been made to use the 7 1/2' oars initially. Long, even strokes led us to Ipswich Bay. The open waters of the northwest shore provided some excitement. Several of the sliding seat rigs and one of the Hawaiian outrigger canoes were flipped. Switching to our 7' oars reduced the incidence of catching a tip in the swells and resulted in much smoother progress.

Wind and waves around the points produced confused seas which surged over the bow. The steady stroke of oars pulled in unison resulted in progress toward Halibut Point. After 90 minutes we switched out, took quick breaks to swill diluted sports drink and throw a few

scoops with the bailer. The prior night's driving tour of the course enabled us to identify landmarks and to track progress using the laminated chart which was duct taped to the thwart riser. We made Halibut Point and enjoyed a following breeze across the mouth of Pigeon Cove. The thought of putting in a Rockport slipped away and we passed inside of Straitsmouth Island. A committee boat logged our number as we had passed the halfway point in two hours.

Our little craft entered the lee of Cape Ann after passing Thatcher Island. This is a long stretch which is open to the Atlantic and has seen heavy seas during prior Challenges. Long swells were encountered but the tide had changed and we made good progress. Warning had been given to take care and track a straight course along the sandy beaches of Briar Neck. By keeping Cape Ann Light over John's right shoulder we were able to track a fairly straight course. The running sea kept turning us toward shore so extra effort was put into the starboard oar.

Three hours of virtually non stop rowing was beginning to take its toll. Keep in mind that the average age in our craft was 50+ years. A decision was made to switch out and take another break for fluid and food. More diluted sports drink, an envelope of energy slime and a handful of scroggin put us back on form. Finally Eastern Point Light appeared over our starboard bow. Gloucester Harbor and the final leg of the Blackburn lay on the other side of the breakwater.

Cape Ann had sheltered us from the wind during our row down the eastern shore. Upon clearing the end of the breakwater, we turned into a stiff northwest breeze. Encouragement rang out from both positions as we slogged up the harbor. The initial goal of finishing within six hours was quickly forgotten. "Put your back into those oars, lads, if you want to finish in less than four hours." The last two miles of the Blackburn Challenge are a blur. Pulling past the final committee boat, yelling our entry number and being informed on our finish time, 3:56:44 is part of a memory that will not fade.

Within minutes our group reassembled on the beach. Uncle Wes had followed us around the Cape by driving to the points and waiting at each for us to pass. Handshakes and congratulatory hugs were in order for all those who had completed the course. After a quick detour for rehydration, I headed over to one of the massage tables in an attempt to avoid the kinks associated with nearly four hours of hard rowing. The race committee provided platters of food, cold drinks and live music for the growing crowd. Awards were distributed in the middle of the afternoon and the the crowd began to break up.

Although our crews left without medals or plaques, each of us walked away with a feeling of accomplishment and newfound camaraderie. I have the added bonus of having established a friendship with a person, John Hitchcock, from halfway around the world, based upon a common interest in rowing and a willingness to share a bit of hospitality with a stranger.

For information on the Blackburn Challenge contact the Cape Ann Rowing Club at www.blackburnchallenge.com.

Lone Voyager: The Extraordinary Adventures of Howard Blackburn, Hero Fisherman of Gloucester by Joseph E. Garland, paperback, 320 pages, revised edition (July 2000) Simon & Schuster, ISBN: 06848726333 is available from multiple sources.

White Fleet

The cruise news is replete with interesting stories this time of year. The Norwegian Cruise Lines' *Escape* sent passengers' blood pressures soaring and lawyers hearts pulsating when 110mph winds struck broadside propelling crew and paying folks all over the decks, tables and chairs flipping and dishes a'smashin'. The videos of the event show bartenders watching as all their glasses, bottles and equipment fly around like paper airplanes. Much screaming and chaos follow. Several were slightly injured. The ship itself was unharmed. The National Weather Bureau showed that this sudden wind was unforeseen and limited to one specific and small spot off New York. One passenger stated that he had often cruised and weather issues are common and need attention by passengers. If you sail, expect to get wet, say I.

Princess Cruise Lines ship, the *Regal Princess*, played rescue ship when the crew saved two men from a plane crash in the Caribbean. The plethora of cruise ships in areas like this make them a quick and ready aid for people in peril. A Royal Caribbean ship rescued two sailors who had been adrift for several weeks. A Carnival Cruise Line vessel recovered a Norwegian crewman who had gone over the side.

Regent Seven Seas announced that a woman, a first for that company, would skipper its newest ship. Captain Serena Melani is the CO of *Seven Seas Splendor*. She graduated from Italy's Nautical College in 1993, one of only a few women. She served on freighters, tankers and other ships before being hired by Regent Seven Seas. In 2010 she qualified for Bridge Officer.

Port San Diego reports that it pulled over \$9.4 billion into the local economy last year. This is up 13% in the last two years and 22% in the last four years. Among the sectors making big bucks are waterfront businesses, ship handling, shipbuilding and repair, tourism and hospitality. Eighty-eight cruise line ships docked at San Diego last year.

As an old Navy deck swab jockey, I discovered that API is the cruise lines' go to company for new decking. Its Flexigel Decoro is the number one decking material because it is light, endures punishment and looks like teak. Where was this stuff when I was waxing and buffing decks?

Princess Cruise Lines claims that its ships have the best at sea wifi in the world. *Golden Princess* was the first to use MedallionNet that seems as fast as on land systems. Within the year *Coral Princess*, *Island Princess*, *Crown Princess* and *Emerald Princess* will all allow passengers to play games on their cell phones, check the stock market, take boring photos for their alleged friends and stay up to date on Facebook. This is exactly NOT what a cruise is supposed to be.

Twenty new expedition ships entered the cruise market in 2018 and more are on the way. Linblad recently ordered another sister ship to their current fleet including *National Geographic Quest*, *National Geographic Endurance* and *National Geographic Venture*. These ships can house 125 people as they explore the Arctic and Antarctic region using zodiac, kayaks, cross country skis and jet skis. A veritable orgy of copycat ships is being constructed. Penguins are soliciting the hot chocolate monopoly.

In an advertisement, Royal Caribbean showed the propellers being mounted on the *Spectrum of the Seas*, a 1,138', 168,800



Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.
(Doc) Regan

ton GT behemoth. The props weigh 29 tons each with ten blades of three tons. The process took five days with jewelers precision to place the props on their azipods. I thought azipods were river creatures that were boiled, blackened and served spicy in New Orleans. *Spectrum of the Seas* immediately left drydock for a voyage of 51 days between Barcelona, Spain, and Shanghai, China. She carries 4,246 guests and a crew of 1,551.

Royal Caribbean's *Mariner of the Seas* comes complete with carnival rides including a Sky Pad that is a combination bungee jump and trampoline. Unfortunately a malfunction broke the elastic bands, sending one man through the webbing and onto the deck, crushing his pelvis, dislocating his shoulder and causing severe internal injuries. He must now use a walker and wheelchair. He is suing Royal Caribbean for a mere \$10 million. The equipment piece was never intended for use at sea and the ship evidently had no one trained on upkeep. Lawyers are smiling.

Environment

A hydrofoil ferry smacked into a humpback whale causing serious injury to five of her 125 passengers. No word on the whale.

A dive boat called the Coast Guard to report that a large whale off Maui was encased in netting and had a bridle tearing its mouth. Immediately divers, the Coast Guard and volunteers came running to help the beast. After cutting several strands of netting they realized that the bridle had worked itself deep into the flesh of the mouth area. Avoiding a wicked tail and risking their own lives, the rescuers eventually freed the mouth and other essential areas but left some of the netting still attached to the poor whale.

The Iowa DNR locked horns with the Farm Bureau over water cleanliness. The former has denied swimming for 2019 in several lakes and rivers within the state due to agricultural pollution. The quite wealthy Farm Bureau has fought every legislative endeavor to regulate water quality.

The Institute for Antarctic Marine Studies discovered that balloons are the top killers of sea birds. Examining 1,733 Antarctic dead birds, they found that over 20% of them died by ingesting Mylar balloon material. Fifty percent of the birds that consume plastic will die. Interestingly, hard plastic will typically pass through, however, soft plastic tends to remain in the body.

Bob Bitchin's delightful magazine, *Cruisin' Outpost*, printed Tania Abie's diatribe about plastic in the ocean. For those unfamiliar with Ms Abie, she is a well known circumnavigator, cruiser and author. She bitterly decries the amount of plastic junk she sees on a daily basis when sailing. From balloons to lawn chairs to coolers to water bottles, she journeys through this mess with increasing anger. Oceanic eddies contain enough plastic to cover Alaska or Texas. This provides evidence that humans are crapping

in their own nests.

Iowa DNR enlists hundreds of canoe volunteers to float together for a week cleaning up a specific river. The videos of their efforts is amazing as they pull up tires, old cars, appliances and sundry junk that is subsequently cut up, recycled or dumped in land sites. Like Ms Abie's experiences, a canoeist or kayaker cannot travel very far without observing the eyesores and pollution along the banks and under the water of Iowa's rivers.

The government noted that 20% of the fish sold in the US is mislabeled. When you order sea bass in the restaurant, you probably are getting whitefish. My brother Mike owned a restaurant in partnership with another guy who also had another restaurant. They advertised Friday night specials of North Atlantic cod. The other guy really used cheap fish and bragged about his low food costs. Mike used cod and suffered from his partner's jibes. The other guy went broke. Mike had crowded lines standing outside on Friday night and he bought out his partner.

Inland Waterways

Towboat *St Rita* sank in the Mississippi river near La Place, Louisiana. Another towboat, the *Rod C*, rescued the crew. The *St Rita* left behind a 15 mile oil streak from her bunkers that hold approximately 13,000 gallons. The 66' boat was built in 1997. Crawfish from Louisiana will have a slightly Exxonish taste to them.

Mr Trump announced his budget. Going through the fine print, the Corps of Engineers note that their budget is being cut 31%. Perhaps holding our breath for new locks and dams is a bad idea.

The bulkheads at the St Anthony Falls (Minnesota) Lock and Dam, the one before Lock #1, were removed to provide greater water flow after unusual snowfall and flooding upstream. In 2015 the lock was left shut to keep out Asian carp but the Corps of Engineers still may use it for flood control. Despite Mississippi Bob's explanation of why there are two locks above #1 (the Ford dam), I believe these should have been called Lock 00 and Lock 0.

A ferryboat flipped in the Tigris River killing at least 70 people on their way to Umm Rabaen, a tourist destination, to celebrate Nowruz, a New Years Celebration. Umm Rabaen is an island not far from Mosul, a city held by ISIS until recently.

Gray Fleet

The Coast Guard rescued 46 fishermen who were floating free in Lake Erie due to an ice floe breaking off from the shore. The rescuers used a pair of airboats, two Dolphin and two Jayhawk helicopters in the operation. Over 100 other fishermen were able to jump from floe to floe to reach safety.

The *USS Zumwalt* (DDG-1000), the stealthy and ultra modern destroyer, left San Diego for operations in cooperation with the Canadian Navy along the west coast of Canada. Captain Andrew Carlson, Commanding Officer, said that he was looking forward to the exercises with the Canadians in order to further test the destroyer's topnotch radar and information systems. Evidently the rumor that Canada is building a wall to stem immigration from the US is false.

Don't look now but someone in the Pentagon showed signs of possessing a brain and having the ability to use it. Admiral John Richardson, Chief of Naval Operations, announced

that the Navy was rethinking its budget in order to develop more unmanned surface and underwater vehicles. By rejecting the planned nuclear refueling of the *Harry S Truman* (CVN-75) scheduled for 2025, Richardson moved money toward a high tech Navy.

Certain to arouse the ire of the three gaping maws of the Surface, Air and Submarine fleets, Richardson proceeded to blow rainbows in the direction of those to be deeply offended by spewing forth the typical demand for more surface ships, especially carriers and frigates. He tossed out the obligatory statements regarding the need to increase the overall fleet by a gazillion ships and uttered the mandated reminder that China and Russia are a natural threat. Nevertheless, the prime body of his statement dealt with unmanned vessels. This almost marks a first from the top squid. Plus the fact he is actually diverting funds proffers proof that the Navy is making a change. Helm's a'lee!

Electric Boat, owned by General Dynamics, was awarded \$2 billion for Block V *Virginia* Class submarines. The company is currently building the remaining versions of Block IV hunter killer submarines.

Merchant Fleet

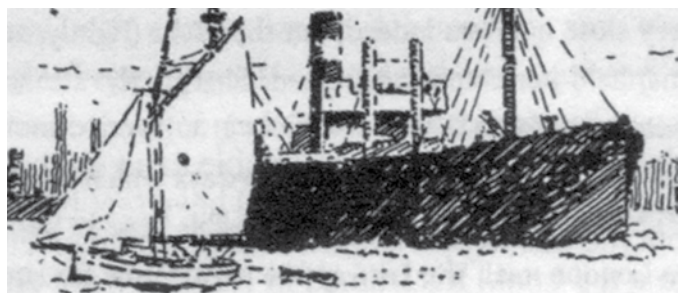
The survey vessel, *Seabed Constructor*, overheard an SOS and immediately rendered service in rescuing one sailor from the *Ti Paradise* that capsized near the Falkland Islands. Two remained missing. The survivor had serious head injuries. Thirty mph seas hampered the rescue.

Hyundai Heavy Industries and Korea Development Bank acquired Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering for \$1.7 billion. This purchase brought the total of HHI's Korean shipyards to four.

A Grimaldi Lines container ship, *Grande America*, discovered an onboard container on fire and requested assistance. The French sent ships out to their Biscay Bay position only to find that the ship's fire was totally out of control and the crew had abandoned ship at 0200 hours. The ship sank at 1526 in very deep water. Grimaldi worries about environment concerns.

Port Authorities are predicting a slowdown in harbor growth, however, they maintain that the China-US rift is not responsible. Experts believe that smaller ports will sustain more business while the larger ports will actually decrease. Meanwhile the Port of Long Beach is preparing for even greater growth despite the China-US issues. They believe that shipping will actually increase. Long Beach had eight million TEU come through their port. They aim to handle 41 million TEUs annually in 20 years.

Three Ukrainian vessels were seized by the Russian Border Patrol for allegedly "illegal border crossing." Crew and officers were hustled into jail as the ship was taken to a Russian port. The US, Europe and Canada immediately placed increased sanctions on Russia that is already under the gun for illegal oil operations in Crimea.



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It all started when a friend gave me a canoe. I live in the middle of flatwater Michigan and have been a longtime *MAIB* reader and a lifelong fool for boats. My garage rafters are hung with care with crusty canoes and kayaks. But my scene took a turn when I visited a nearby friend who has an even more intensive propensity for messing around.

Pat is, I'd say, our area's volunteer superstar. He loves community outdoor fun. And he has pole barns. He organizes logistics for a huge old volunteer run weeklong bike tour. And he's neck deep in local paddle fun, too (though he always wears his PFD).

A few years ago the youngsters at MSU started an absurd event called the Campus to Coast, they paddle nonstop in the way too early spring 150 miles from the center of Michigan downstream to Lake Michigan. They do it the week before final exams so they're all still in town yet haven't gone berserk with study. About 100 kooks start out. Pat helps. He also stores for the youngsters one of the "hero boats" used for outings like that, a huge 23' four person kevlar Wenonah expedition race canoe.

He helped fundraise to buy it for kids who, after mastering the C to C, decided to try set a Mississippi canoe record by paddling it without stopping in a boat big enough to sleep and eat in. They'd get fed from boats that would come out from the shore to supply them as they kept paddling along. Pat did a fair bit of that shore support and more. That's the kind of guy Pat is. His policy for storing the big canoe, and probably everything else, was that it would be available to the community to borrow.

So I stopped by his house once for a non-profit board meeting he was hosting (for the regional Quiet Adventure Symposium) and did a little sightseeing of various craft stashed about the property. That's when I saw it. It was a three person Minnesota 3 kevlar Wenonah canoe, featherlight at 55lbs pounds despite being 20' long. And it was full of holes.



Pat is good at delegating and persuasion. He saw me lay eyes on the wreck and asked, "Do you want it? Take it tonight. I will load it on your van for you. Then you fix it and you can have it. Just make it available for people to borrow. A friend and I bought it cheap a few years ago and haven't done anything with it." It was an offer I couldn't refuse, especially since he'd already told me to pick up the other

The Making of a Party Canoe

By Jeff Potter



end of the boat. I was thinking it might make an awesome party boat!

The big boat was set up for racing with hydration jug holders and other fittings for nonstop high speed performance. I was going to rip out all that stuff and make room for a picnic or party in the middle 8' of the boat or for where someone could take a nap. Yet it could still be an expedition boat. It seems sometimes the pleasure potential of light performance boats can be overlooked. My view is that we don't always have to paddle hard. Or "hydrate." Sometimes it's good to lolly-gag and sip wine. Or sometimes paddling hard can mingle with relaxing hard.

A year later I "gotaroundtuit" and dug into repairing the big boat. It had started to become overgrown in our yard, emergency! I scraped off the flaking patches that encrusted most of the hull where someone had attempted to repair it. I marveled at the ruin. It had at least 40 leaks, holes and tears. Some openings were a foot long! Plus broken ribs and bent and broken aluminum gunnels. Wow! I marked them all with a black sharpie and stood back and marveled.



I got a lot of advice from expert friends who told me things like how I should re-vacuum bag the hull. All sorts of advice for making professional repairs. But I needed a quick repair and needed only that the boat float and not hurt anyone and have party space. I was doing this by myself, catch as catch can. It would have to do! I was going to execute the required mission, nothing more.

From our local West Marine franchise I bought \$120 worth of supplies, several yards of glass cloth and a gallon of WEST System 105 epoxy resin and 207 hardener. I like using WEST products since they're great and made in Michigan. (Their G/Flex is especially awesome since it's flexible and designed for dissimilar, moist materials that vibrate.)

I cut and placed patches and got to mixin'. Man, epoxy can cook off quick if you're not precise! I mixed small batches and patched for a couple long sessions. Then I sanded and filled the weave until it was tolerably smooth. I don't think I did a "good" job, but I fulfilled the mission. I'm aware of the values of engineering, solve the required problem at the right level.



It was waterproof again and stiff where it should be. I unbent and splinted the gunnels with smoothed out aluminum bars epoxied and clamped in place. It blushes a bit depending on the weather. I read I can

wash that out and have scrubbed away some already. But the thing feels tough! And wow, is it light! Lifting such a big boat so easily gives the impression of it weighing even less than it does. I also like how it's somewhat see through with its glowing golden fabric hull, the sun does shine through it.



Its light weight makes it so easy to carry and strap onto a vehicle roof and to manage on the water. It will, of course, be running straight! Not a boat for a small twisty river. We could install a light aluminum plate Verlen Kruger style foot rudder on it! More canoes should have such rudders.



Then I noticed another of my beat up old canoes, an early '80s glass Mad River Malecite with cane seats that had blown out and a hull that had always swayed and oil canned because we're heavier than the 150 pounders who the low freeboard boat was specced for. It has three seats so it can be paddled solo or with three! I remove the wrecked seats with lawn chair webbing, nice! Then I removed the long bolts that the seats hung down from and which swayed like the dickens when we paddled. I rebolted the seats right snug to the wooden gunnels. Tightened that boat right up!

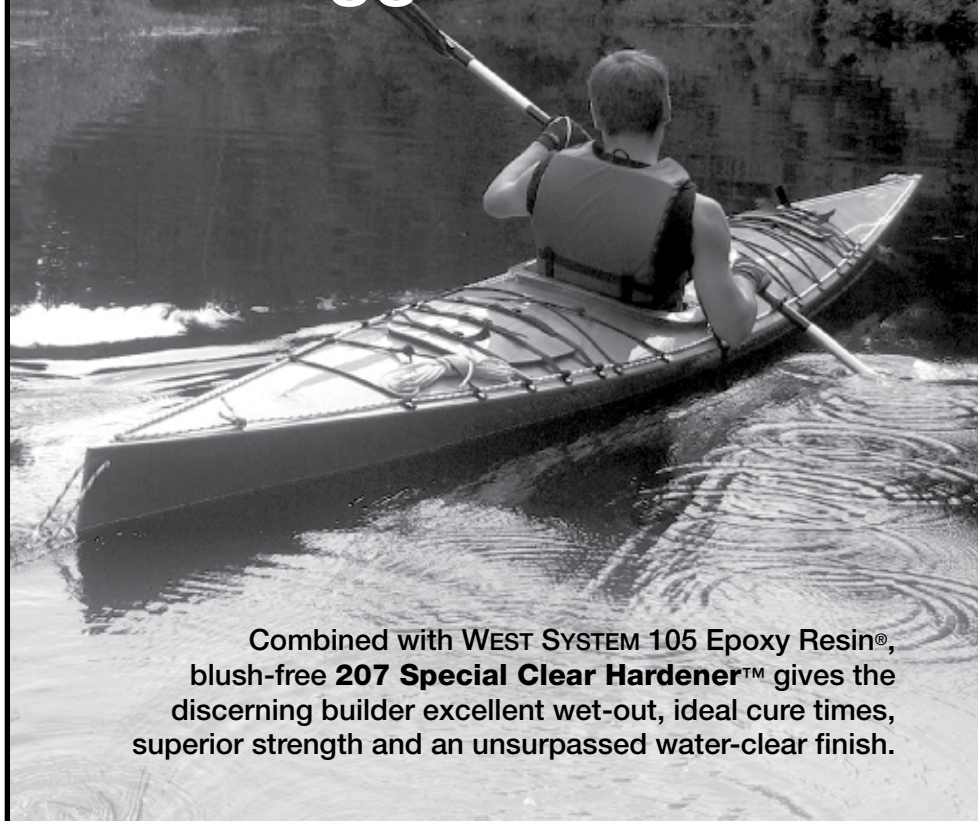
We are tallish and enjoy strong paddling. The now higher seats give us better ergonomics. We can easily handle any increased tip-piness. Then I cut foam blocks and wedged them under each seat which firmed up the hull. We immediately took it for a test paddle on the river down the street. It's like a new boat! Wonderful! Repair fever frenzy pays off!

After taking that small break from the big boat, I told friends that it was ready for a test. They'd been excited to experience it and have a spacious party boat added to our fleet. They aren't serious paddlers but they seriously like to have a good time amid natural beauty. I have found that at least a few younger people are interested in outdoor fun that includes cultural considerations, which is one of the ways I like to roll. It's a nice way we can bridge our generational differences.

So we went for an afternoon paddle and picnic. It was everything I imagined it would be. Hooray! Hooray for friends, fun and quick fixes!



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Winter Meeting

Once again the fickle winter weather threatened to toss a wrench into our plans, but we lucked out and a beautiful day appeared in between two snow events and allowed us to carry on.

Benson Gray celebrated his birthday with us by driving down from Falmouth, Maine, bringing along a 1908 Old Town that was looking for a new home and a display of canoe badges and labels that he put together on a pair of sailing canoe lee boards. The lee-boards went back home to Maine and the Old Town followed Fitz home to Concord to be added to the collection of over 100-year-old canoes that is slowly filling the yard.

John will have a hard time deciding which old canoes to bring to the WCHA Assembly in July, he only has room for four on his trailer. The 1908 Old Town is a CS grade HW model that was originally delivered to a student at Princeton and has remained in one family since new. This canoe is a nice find and it is in really solid condition. With new canvas, some paint and varnish it will be a real show stopper.



Old canoes always seem to attract a crowd!

Nice paddles seemed to be a popular theme for this year's meeting. Stuart Fall brought an interesting pair of new Red Tail paddles and Brad Chamberlin showed us a pair of paddles that he got from a neighbor's barn that go back to the very early 1900s. It is believed that they were made in sea-coast Maine by Native Americans. Mike Parr brought some nice paddles along with a collection of miniature canoes that he has been collecting from yard sales, flea markets, curio shops and souvenir stores for many years. Alan Doty didn't let us down, he brought a new gadget to show, this one a new style camp stove that uses twigs and leaves for fuel. A nice design that looks like it would work well and be easy to use. Perhaps we will get to see the stove in use on our May wilderness trip.

Fox Project Report

The stations for the building form have been made up and were temporarily mounted on a piece of 2"x10" to double check for fairness, so far so good. Disregard the slight hogging along the keel line, the 2"x10" tends to sag in the middle, the length of dowel stock is making an attempt to support it. When the actual form is built the 2"x10" will be replaced by a 12"x6" box beam 14' long, the box beam will not have any sag in it. This project has been put on the side burner for now as a couple of restoration projects have come in and filled all available space. As these new projects get finished work on the Fox will continue.



Norumbega Chapter WCHA

The Southern New England Chapter of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association, Ltd

Spring Newsletter

Steve Lapey, Editor

Doug Deyoe's Old Town Canvassing Event

Member Doug Deyoe of Acton, Massachusetts, has been working on a 16' Old Town Guide canoe for some time now and, when it became time for the canvas to be put on, he was looking for a little assistance with this seemingly daunting task. With a tempting offer of coffee and blueberry pancakes he managed to get your editor and John Fitzgerald to travel to Acton on January 19 to help with the canvas.

The weather forecasters were on the air all day warning us of the impending blizzard that was headed our way for later in the day, so the race was on to get the canoe covered in time to be on the road home ahead of the snow. In the end we awoke Sunday morning to about 4" of snow and precipitation that had turned to mostly rain. So much for weather forecasts.

After the nourishment we descended to Doug's basement workshop where the canoe was already hanging in its canvas sling waiting for us to stretch the fabric and staple it in place. Securing the canvas to the wall at one end and with a come along attached to the other took care of the stretching, 200lbs of scrap iron scattered along the inside of the hull provided all the downward tension one could ever ask for.



John and Doug with the Old Town ready for stapling.

John brought his trusty T-50 manual stapler and loaded it with the 1/2" stainless steel staples that Doug was able to find at the local Home Depot store. He chose to stretch and staple on the port side of the hull using the modified vise-grip pliers that Doug had made. I came fully equipped with a small air compressor and the pneumatic version of the T-50 stapler and reported to the starboard side of the canoe with a second pair of the vise grips.



Steve and John stapling on opposite sides of the Old Town.

Doug jumped in and helped with the stretching and stapling and in under an hour the canvas was attached along both sides all the way to the decks. It was now time to remove the scrap iron, release the tension from the come along and flip the canoe upside down to finish up the ends.

The stems of the Old Town had been treated with epoxy glue to fill in the old tack holes and strengthen the wood for the new tacks. The epoxy that Doug used must have been some super duty stuff, it was almost impossible to drive a brass tack into the wood and the manual stapler was unable to drive a 3/8" staple all the way in.



Using the pneumatic stapler to attach the canvas to the stem.

Fortunately, by cranking the air pressure up to 85psi, the pneumatic stapler was able to drive the staples in with only a few instances of bent staples. Once or twice the stapler jammed with a bent staple and had to be cleared, but we had the ends buttoned up in short order.



All canvassed and now ready for filler and paint. This Old Town will be ready for use by springtime.

By noon time we were packing up tools and heading home, well ahead of the weather, another Norumbega canoe on its way back to the water.

A New Tool for the Canoe Shop

Recently here at the canoe shop we received an interesting canoe that had been in a garage under a very large tree. When the tree came down and destroyed the garage, the canoe was crushed. The initial count of broken ribs was 24, later it proved to be 28. The ribs were not just broken, they were badly twisted out of shape. Normally with damage this severe the canoe would have been declared a total loss and sent to the burn pile, but the family that had owned this canoe for the past 60 or 70 years really wanted it to be saved, even though the cost of repairs will far exceed the price of a new replacement canoe.

One of the first tasks that needed to be done on the crushed canoe was to try to get the hull back to its original shape prior to making and installing the new ribs. To do this it was determined that a wooden form would have to be made to force each broken rib back to shape and hold it there until the replacement rib could be nailed in. To do this 24 forms had to be made, each one different, cut to the desired curve of that rib. Fortunately most of the damage was on one side of the hull leaving the opposite side undamaged. The undamaged side could be used as a pattern to make the forms.

The big problem was how to easily transfer the curves to the wood that would become the form. Paper, cardboard, pencils and scissors worked, but it appeared that one would need a lot of patience just to make one pattern, let alone 24. Just in time, Woodcraft Supply sent their catalog and in it was a new item, a curved template that could duplicate any curve and hold it while one transferred it to a pattern. It sounded too good to be true but I took the chance and ordered one right away. The good folks at UPS had it at our doorstep in a few days.

This tool is one of those rare ones that works as well as it is advertised. Quick and simple, it only took a few minutes to get the hang of it and in the end a chore that would have taken days to complete was done in a few hours.

The tool consists of a 37" length of spring steel with a fitting about every 6" with a knob that tightens on a series of slotted steel bars. When the knobs are loosened the spring steel is flexible, when the knobs are tightened the spring steel becomes locked in place.



Out of the box it looked a little confusing and it has a big warning about not getting your fingers pinched in the tool.



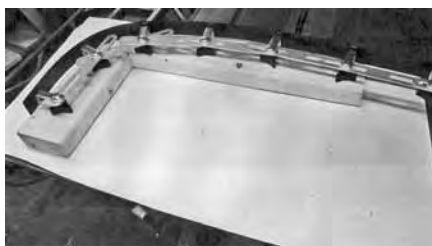
The tool in place in the canoe and pressed into the curve. When the knobs were tightened the tool retained the shape of the curve, exactly. The row of broken ribs is noticeable along the right side of the canoe with a few more on the left side.



Out of the canoe and at the bench the template was positioned on the pattern blank that had been made up from some 2"x4" stock.



At the band saw it was a quick task to cut the pattern right to the line.



The first few forms went into place and proved that the system would work.


With the forms made and in place over the distorted ribs I used 2" sheet rock screws and fender washers to go through the planking and the ribs and into the forms. When the screws were torqued down the ribs were forced back into their original position. When it is time to install the replacement rib the broken rib with the screw hole in it will be trashed anyway, so the hole will not be a problem. The small hole in the planking will be right over the rib so it will not be visible under the canvas.



Finally, all of the forms are in place, ready for the next step which will be replacing the broken inwale, after that the rib replacement will begin.

Usually I am wary of fancy new tools from the expensive woodworking stores but this time it worked out very well. These curved pieces were made in minutes instead of hours. I highly recommend this new product for the canoe shop or dozens of other applications. This tool is available from Woodcraft Supply, it is item number 148455, Wood River Curve Template-37". They also have the same thing in a 107" size, some one may need something that big.

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I am as disappointed as anyone that this Part Four is even needed, as I had hoped to wrap up this project in Part Three, including the sailing trials. But life happens and things go much more slowly than one expects, especially as we inevitably get older.

For the second ama, I had thought about using the same 10oz polyester leftover from my skin-on-frame Chuckanut 12 build that I had used on the first ama. The fabric was heavily creased from being folded tightly in shipment, even though it had been on a cardboard roll in the attic for the last two years. This would not have been a problem on the skin-on frame boat for which it was intended as the heat shrinking would pull out the creases, but as a foam covering it made a very unsatisfactory surface, full of unsightly creases.

So I tried to press out the creases on this new piece of polyester fabric with my shop steam iron, much as I do with the creases in canvas before covering. Guess what happens when you apply heat to the creases in a heat shrink fabric? It selectively shrinks in the spots you heat and won't lay flat no matter what you do. That's when I gave up on the polyester and got some more cotton duck canvas for the second ama!

Many people, including Rowerwet (who started this whole foam boat thing as far as I know), use bedsheets or more loosely woven canvas drop cloths for covering foam boats. But since I am expecting the fabric to add some strength to the structure, much as fiberglass cloth does for plywood/epoxy boats, I elected to go with the cotton duck canvas which is stronger and heavier but goes on smoothly and will be strong in tension. It's reasonably priced when bought on sale (about \$5/yd, 60" wide).

No sooner did I complain about the "brutally cold weather" (I can hear the laughter from AlmostCanada), than the sun rose on a beautiful day with highs in the 60s so work could continue on the second ama. Some sanding of rough glue joints in the canvas, some filling with DAP Lightweight Spackle, a little additional sanding, then covering the canvas seams with white duct tape and the ama was ready for paint.

I used two coats of Lowes super most bestest latex house paint (Sherwin Williams Everlast One Coat Paint and Primer), lightly sanded between coats, for both the orange and white, as on the hull and the first ama. All the canvas seams were covered with 3M white 2" duct tape before painting. The trim stripe is that "Ferociously Strong T-Rex Tape." The canvas covered ama turned out much better than the polyester covered ama. I have found it very challenging to obtain a really nice finish on my foam boats. For these boats I will have to be content with a decent "fun boat" finish.

It's now a week or so later. I had thought that the creases in the polyester covered ama were permanent because the first ama was already painted. But today I decided to try and heat shrink those creases out by covering the creases with some T-shirt cloth and giving them some real heat with my trusty \$10 Walmart iron. It worked like a charm! I did all four sides in about an hour and now that ama looks almost as good as the canvas covered one. Almost.

Trifoam 16 Build

Part Four

By Jim Brown

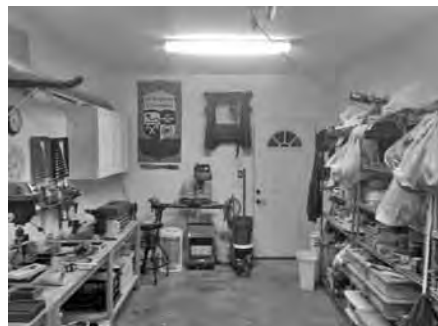


I think all the pieces have been finished. Now to see whether it will all fit together! There is not enough room in the garage without parking the car out in the weather so I will have to clean out the shop first as everything in it is covered with wood and pink foam dust. This will be a major task as the shop is a real mess^o and has cobwebs hanging from the wall.



raduation this Friday, grandson Mike's college graduation soon following and Christmas shortly afterward, there will be a delay until my next entry. Whoops! Just found out granddaughter-in-law Marina graduated from college also. That one was a surprise we didn't know was coming and are happy to hear about.

The shop is now cleaned up and rearranged sufficiently to move the Trifoam in. We just need a sunny (or at least not rainy) day to make the move to where we can install the amas and do some finishing touches.



The photos make the space look narrow but there are about 7' from the edge of the bench to the edge of the racks on the other side. Not to worry. If the Trifoam won't fit, I'll move the Gheenoe over here instead.

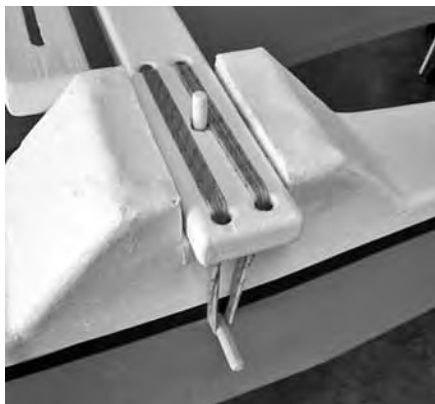
Well, the Trifoam 16 fit in the cleared out shop, but there was not sufficient room to work around it to install the amas so the Trifoam went back to the garage and the Gheenoe is now in the shop. The Gheenoe hull and trailer are actually wider than the Trifoam rig but I won't be working on that boat for the foreseeable future. The Gheenoe is a 1980 model I restored and put a new motor on, so it is as good as new.



The sun finally shone brightly today (Christmas Eve) so I was able to install the amas. Everything seemed to fit pretty well. The sliding ama system is pretty hard to work and will require some fiddling, and the foam blocks I installed to lower the amas closer to the water prevent the amas from retracting to their narrowest, so some mods will be made. Such is the nature of prototypes. In the following photos the amas are retracted as far as they will now go, to about 7'6" overall. By modifying the foam blocks, I can reduce that by at least 15". Fully open, they should be about 10' overall.



The system of lashing the amas to the akas worked very well, using about 17' of $\frac{3}{32}$ " braided polypropylene line at each joint. There was no technical reason to select that line, it was just orange and gray colored line that sort of matched the boat. You can see the interference between the end of the opposite sliding aka and the foam ama mountings in both of the following pix.



Some of these final details take a lot of time. For instance, I was concerned that I wouldn't have enough rudder in the water using the Trilaris rudder I had previously made, which I had already lengthened by 6". So I made a new rudder blade 8" longer than that one and with a 4" square cutout filled with BBs set in epoxy (vs the previous 3" square cutout). A small project, but with one coat of stain and three coats of Helmsman varnish, it stretched out to about a week. Of course, I was doing other stuff as well like building mast supports for storage or trailering, which also needed staining and varnishing. Here are a few more pix.



Now we're heading to Florida for a week or so to visit one of our sons and family, so will be back to this time in February. It's only a two hour flight from Knoxville to Punta Gorda, a lot better than a two day drive! At \$110 each, round trip non stop, we couldn't drive there for that. The necessary car rental was expensive, however.

Right now the weather here is either in the 40s and raining, or bitterly cold (for us), but sunny and windy. So it may be a while before I get this thing outside and rigged.

Well, we're back from our visit to Naples, Florida. It was very chilly for the first four days, courtesy of the Polar Vortex, but warmed up nicely to 80ish for the rest of the week. We had a great visit but always glad to be home.

Weather here had been very cold while we were gone but is 50-60ish now. Got our taxes done (thank you Turbotax) along with other month end chores so I can get back to work on the boat. A lot of details left to do like rigging the sail (once I get a nice day when it's not raining or too windy), rudder push pull stick, holders for the leeboard and rudder stick, bumper for the hull where the rudder may hit it, mods to the retractable amas, etc, etc.

Well, it is now just past St Valentines Day. The following day was our 40th wedding anniversary. We were just 45 and 39 back then, living in Martinsville, Virginia, and had no idea of all the things that lay ahead. I had just lost my wife of 22 years the previous year to a rare form of cancer for which there was no known treatment. I felt like my life was over.

But then I met Carole and asked her out to dinner and dancing at the Hotel Roanoke. We really hit it off. People asked us how long we had been dancing together and were surprised to hear this was our first date. It was like I had known her all my life and six weeks later we were married. She came with two teenaged kids, a cat, a dog and a pet skunk. I had two teenaged boys left at home (our daughter had married just before her mother passed, to a fellow civil engineering student at the University of Tennessee). I have been twice blessed in marriage! The rest, as Paul Harvey used to say on the radio, is history.

I have managed to get the rudder stick rigged ($\frac{1}{2}$ "x10' PVC pipe) with a rope swivel joint and stainless eye bolt mounted to the leeboard bracket as a guide. Also got the removable tail light assembly mounted to the rear deck using two stainless screw eyes and a heavy duty flat bungee cord passed under the hull. Here are some pix:



The next step was to modify the aka/ ama mounting points so that the sliding ama assembly could bypass the aka support and make the boat narrower. A little work with the pull saw, and, voila, the dirty deed was done. The boat, previously at 6'4", is now about 18" narrower at minimum width so there is a lot more room in the garage for the car and lawn care stuff. The sliding akas are working much better with a few small tweaks.



Now I just need a nice day with no wind so I can raise the mast and rig the sprit boom and main sheet. That may be a while but there are a few more small things I can be doing. For instance, installing a strap to hold up the leeboard while transporting or in storage, placing stops in the sliding aka setup so it stops sliding at the exact points for fully opened (126") and fully closed (76"), installing a clam cleat to hold the rudder in the "up" position when needed and placing screw eyes where needed for the hold down straps.



February 27 turned out to be a magical day, sunny and a high of 74°! This was our chance to get the boat out of the garage and set up the sail for rigging. The best laid plans of mice and men. When I stood in the boat atop the trailer, the movement due to the trailer springs was severe enough that it was very unsteady, especially with my sense of balance not what it used to be. I was unable to safely raise the mast and unfurl the sail. In the future I will have to raise and lower the mast with the boat off the trailer. That shouldn't be a problem.

However, Carole and I took advantage of the weather to unfurl the leg-o-mutton spritsail on some sawhorses in the garage and rig the main sheet and the snotter setup for the sprit boom. The snotter rig will need more work.

After another week or so of cold and rainy weather, Sunday, March 10, was another nice sunny warm day about 70° so I re did both the main sheet and snotter rigging and added a downhaul on the mast. Time ran out before I was able to raise the mast on the boat and get some photos. I am trying to get these simple control lines led to the main helming position at the back seat. Once I get down in that seat, I don't want to have to get up until we're back at the ramp!

Today was decent and 60ish with just a slight breeze so we got the boat off the trailer and got the mast raised with the help of a nice young man named Carmelo who does the neighborhood lawns. Trifoam has gained considerable weight with the addition of the akas, amas, mast and sail. We found that there will need to be some changes so that Carole and I will be able to handle this rig by ourselves. For instance, the winch that came with this old jetski trailer will need to be replaced and the carpeted supports on the trailer will need to be covered with tarp material, as the canvas boat bottom does not like to slide on carpet.

The rigging of the mainsheet, snotter, sail downhaul and rudder uphaul seemed to work just fine and all but the downhaul can be operated from the back seat.





These few remaining items can be wrapped up soon and we will be ready to splash when the weather becomes reliably warmer, probably some time in April, and the lake levels will be coming back up by then also. I think it's time to submit this Part Four and then finish with a short sailing report at that time.

Those who have been following this saga since the start of my ill fated Trilars project may recall that the reasons for building this trimaran were based on our ages (85 and 80 in April). I didn't want any more capsizes, ala our Melonseed. Carole doesn't like tippy sailboats. Neither of us are agile enough to be hopping from gunnel to gunnel when tacking. An unstated reason was just to see whether I could design and build a boat of this size and complexity out of foam using a minimum of easily available wood. I think we have accomplished our goals but the proof of that pudding will be in the sailing.

The total cost of this project was right about \$1,600, including the used trailer (about \$300 including mods) and a professionally made sail from Polysails International. I used some materials I had on hand


and didn't need to buy any fittings except for the pintles and gudgeons from Duckworks and a few stainless screweyes from Rural-King, the local farm store. No epoxy was used, save for a small amount to mount the steel BB weights in the leeboard and rudder. All the other fittings and line came from my "old stuff I might use someday collection." I am sure this was less than a similar boat made of decent wood and fiberglass/epoxy would have cost.

I have no idea how many hours this project has taken but I am sure no less than a plywood/epoxy boat of equivalent size and complexity.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Rowerwet for his "Instructable" that led to my building of a foam Sawfish 12 kayak and eventually this Trifoam 16. I will let you know how she does on the water as soon as I can get 'er done. Until then, Faire Winds my friends.



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The Tiki Hut is a 22' octagon with a kitchen off the back. Notice the river in the background. And it's not frozen like some of your waterfront is.

Tiki Hut Grand Tour

Above is a photo of the Tiki Hut from the outside and now to fill out the picture are some of the inside showing some of the collection of "stuff" we have. There is a whole lot more that can't be seen in these photos. You're all welcome to come see for yourselves.



I was sitting out there enjoying the last fire of the season and thought it would be fun to show you all the crap this place has accumulated over the years.

36 – *Messing About in Boats*, May 2019



No shortage of boat models nailed to the ceiling. There's a piranha fish in there somewhere and the bass is one Howard caught on one of his fishing trips from Ohio to Florida with the owner of the company. He flew the company plane, Howard's a pilot.



From the Tiki Hut

By Dave Lucas



It's rare to see this place empty in the evening, if no one is here they are probably down on the dock.



A kitchen with all the amenities required for a bunch of sailormen. Everything in the whole place will withstand a good washdown with a hose. Every good bar needs some rules, these are ours.





The smaller refrigerator is really a big ice maker, an absolute necessity here in the land of heat and sweat, so critical that we have a backup unit waiting in the wings when something goes wrong with the primary.



Probably the last fire this season. It was chilly the last two days, down from the 80s of February but it's forecast to go back up with March now here.



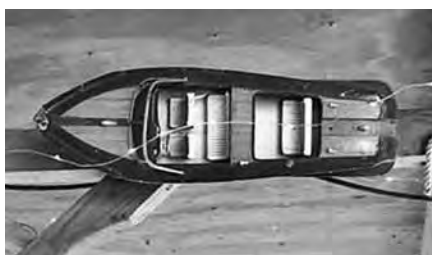
We'll be good if all power goes out, there must be a dozen oil lights hanging around, including oil fired running lights.



Model of a Cape Cod catboat and some half models. Helen and I actually built this catboat way back in the day. It's the one shown in *Small Sailing Craft*.



This cool looking Chris Craft is the inspiration for Howard's new speedboat.



And this catboat model is my *Laylah* boat. She'll be at Cedar Key in May. Hope to see you there.



When Simon gets a chance between his other boats he's getting this motor installed into his little tugboat. He has to be the luckiest guy in the world, everything is falling right into place with this installation.



He did get sidetracked when his dream boat fell into his lap, no telling where he'll end up in this one.



Speaking of wood take a look at this piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ " ply. It's seven plies and has no voids. The $\frac{1}{2}$ " is five plies and no voids that we found after using a dozen or so sheets over the last couple of month. This is the best plywood I've ever worked with, including marine plywood. Why is it, you ask, that this stuff is pressure treated? It won't rot, well, for a while anyway. Home Depot has it, the $\frac{1}{2}$ " is about \$35 and the $\frac{3}{4}$ " is about \$45. It looks terrible in the store, it's heavy out of the door but get it home and give it a quick wash and let it sit for a couple months and it gets really light. Shockingly light.



Just Make Something

I've had a lot of time on Alice, the snow-plow tractor, moving tons and tons of white stuff around. While careening hither and yon on good ol' Alice's back, I've thought about how the doors on *Walkabout* are supposed to look and swing, or not swing. But this can't get settled until I know how the steps look and how big and what angles and whethe-heckknows whatelse?

After trying to visualize all the possible ways I can trip and fall and stumble and simply be inconvenienced with this arrangement, it got too hard. That 36" by 60" cockpit just can't allow for room for every variable. I was still hung up on whether to use sliding doors or a single door or double hung. And then did they swing in or out?

I do have a couple of tools that can make a difference. For instance, while my nose and elbows may have more to do with the outside of a circle, the most important part of that same circle is the middle. The most useful part of any circle is limited to exactly 25% of its total. Taking full advantage of those two eternal verities, we made something.



These were "just a mockup." Yeah sure, nothing persists quite like a temporary solution. They had plenty of room for hinges and intramural clearances. They'd probably turn out pretty stiff and likely retain their relationships to both the centers of those circles and the 90° angles more or less correctly transferred to where the rails intersected with the stiles. So maybe I could just use these "mockups" and make a couple of doors. I just wonder which way they're supposed to swing? One in, one out? Both in? Both out? Maybe pocket sliders? I was sliding dangerously toward mental gridlock.



So again, just make something. Well, well, what have we here? Overlapping window frames that can use that high dollar VHB tape. A bottom section that just magically allowed for two layers of 1" Styrofoam between the faces. Kinda ugly.

The View from Almost Canada by Dan Rogers



OK, that's better. A little of that Frankencedar can hide a lot. Just about makes it inevitable that the rest of the back porch will get something similar. Except somehow a total a 1½" of gaposity on the mockup has translated into at least ½" of interference once the hinges are on. So make 'em narrower until they get wide enough. The rest of it will take care of itself. Just make something.



No Small Epiphany

Since the moment I decided to turn this 1960 vintage express cruiser into a pocket trawler of sorts, a single question has plagued me, "How in the heck am I gonna put windows into this cabin?" They should be symmetrical from side to side. They really shouldn't leak. They shouldn't impede vision any more than absolutely necessary. They need to be durable, easily maintained and within my limited skill set to fabricate and install. A tall list of contradictions.

One big discovery from the local lumber yard's glue display has made a significant contribution to solving this conundrum. That, and returning to two tried and true materials round out the cast of heroes. For six months I really haven't had more than a vague notion of how this thing was supposed to go. The matter of cutting a 60 year old hull apart and reassembling it can lead to many problems. Working alone with simple lifting devices and basic shop tools presents its own set of roadblocks. And a there's another huge problem.

Actually achieving an acceptable degree of fit, finish and function where curves and planes meet up with corners and voids can be a challenge. For me, who never mastered the basics of arithmetic (adding and subtracting) things can get downright obscure. There is an inordinate amount of estimation and interpolation involved. And I suppose the biggest deterrent to conventional success around here

is an embedded need to try something new. No real juice in doing a new project, "like the last one..."



This big deal breakthrough comes from the chorus of that Johnny Cash auto building song, "...one piece at a time..." I needed to finish off the rough spots, get flat plane surfaces to mount polycarbonate window panes and be able to cut less than perfect angles to attach edge on.



I somewhat recently discovered Gorilla Glue construction cement. This stuff is instantly tacky, stays just a wee bit flexible and holds on like a herd of barnacles. The flat stock is ½" MDO plywood. The MDO is about the reliably flattest and void free stuff I can buy in our part of the north woods. The MDO is also primarily produced for the outdoor sign industry. The kraft faced surfaces are smooth and ready for paint. With an absolute minimum of mechanical fasteners I have been able to assemble frames and doors for a total of ten separate windows.



In most respects these artifices are just a simple flange to attach the plastic sheet to on the interior surface. Another breakthrough left over from the last window project last winter is a roll of this magical VHB tape that is like double backed foam tape with no foam. This stuff will adhere well to the MDO surfaces.

There's one more invention yet to figure out. The center panel in the windshield area of the main cabin needs to seal to rain, swing open horizontally in a 180° arc and be durable enough for highway speed wind loads and other impacts.

There's still a modicum of interior trim and gingerbread to fashion but the doors are about to close on this latest opus.

It's Whatchacall a "Working Mockup"

"Let's just try it and see..." part. And the best thing about this one, other than it took a whole day to make and mess with, is that it just might work out OK. The mystery part is the swinging frame in the middle of this picture.



The vent hatch, over the top, seems to fit and swing pretty much unimpeded. The window frame seems to clear most everything. And there's a bunch of things that have to sort of stay out of the way. Of course, if I really thought it would do the job on the first try, I'd done a better job putting it together.



Fiddley Bits and Forecasts

That cockpit bulkhead and doors look like they are gonna work out.



We used up all the cedar strips on interior gingerbread, nuthin' left for the exterior. Wow. All that stock got turned into dust, noise, shavings and a whole bunch of cladding.



I now gotta whomp up another batch of that magic elixir that turns our gingerbread into instant antique look using shellac and a pinch of some sort of yellow pixie dust. The stuff goes on easy and brings out the grain, better in pine than the cedar we're using this time, for a considerable weight reduction but still pretty dramatic.



Window frames, both inside and out appear ready for the next step. Generally I think we're "getting" there."



Leaning on the Shovel

The shop TODO board calls for several things to be done, a coat or two of shellac/tint on the new gingerbread, a couple of patch pieces up under the forward quarters of the wheelhouse prior to window installation and a few other messys. Instead, I carved up the berth cushion and glued it back together into a "dogleg" to fit the Captain's Berth.



I've got some non seamstress ideas that will probably be OK but I never exactly "tried it." With the flare of this hull, things change quite a bit with a few inches more altitude.

About the first time, this has gotten more or less picked up and squared away. Not too shabby for about 90 working days. Pretty homey for a narrow 18' hull. Good news is that berth isn't too short.



Enough of this orderliness. Time to get back to making noise, chips and sawdust and get some tools piled up on the deck and seats and places where I can't remember where I put 'em.

OK, 'Nough of This Winterstuff





On what I figured would be the last push of the last of the snow for this year, I got Alice stuck. There are several inches of ice under all this no longer fashionable Currier & Ives stuff piled up all over the place. But hey, we've got blue skies, temps forecast for the 50s in a few days. And the Main TODO Board has been getting erased more than it's been added to lately. In a wild act I have designated a week from this coming Saturday as "Trailer Day."



If I was logical I'd just say that getting *Walkabout* onto a new to her trailer should just be the obverse of the getting off we did last fall. We've done this dozens of times over the past Building Seasons. Sometimes it went more or less according to plan. Sometimes things went haywire. Every member of our fleet has been lifted on and lifted off. Only a couple have actually been dropped in the process.



All these boats all seem to put on significant weight during the winter. We get to figure out things like seegees on the fly. Anyhow. This is what *Walkabout* looked like about six months ago. Much lower to the ground. Much, much lighter.



We've still got a few big line items on The Board but the snow's gonna melt. Real soon all roads will lead to the Outside World. Hope to see you there!



A Morning Inspection Tour

That band saw stands a bit taller than I do. The snow outside the shop window stands taller than the both of us. I sure hope it all stays outside.



About time I was thinking about finding a place to sit down and think things over, I gathered the starboard settee was ready for fitting and covering. Well, maybe it'll be good to wait until the sawdust and grinding slow down a bit, huh?



And as the sun came up there was Mr Brogans, *Walkabout's* trailer in waiting. Alice has been out scraping the ice down for the big Trailer Day. I have to be able to roll *Walkabout* outside on those itty bitty casters and they will need more or less clear pavement for that. A few more warm days and we just might be getting a lot closer.



And finally a swimmer's eye level view of the new girl, peeking out into the great outdoors. Summer's coming!



50% Done?

Every Building Season, about this time, I'm reminded of The Lucas' pronouncement on being "almost done." Dave says, "When you've got 90% done, you've only got 90% left to go." Jeez, thanks a lot, Dave. I had 50% of the window blanks cut and more or less



shaped to fit the non rectilinear frames. Once the magic tape gets stuck down and ready for Prime Time, the masking will come off and finger prints will rule the day. Actually Rod said he'd come over and help me cuss and squirm those high dollar polycarbonate sheets into a semblance of permanent placement.



So. If we have 50% of 'em cut and only 50% yet to go, that just might have us a whole lot closer to getting 90% of the last 10% of the, well, I'll have to take my shoes off to get that one figured.

Doin' the Limbo... How Loowwww Can We Gooooo?

When it comes to getting out of our shop door, size REALLY matters. We build all winter under a 9' ceiling. Come spring, whatever we may have produced must exit under a 8' door. I decided to get this one onto her trailer inside the shop and gerrymander our way toward freedom.

Here the ends of the axle U-bolts are only $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the floor. I checked and checked again. I could expect at most $1\frac{1}{2}$ " clearance at the doorframe except for the fact that a frost heave seems to have elevated the driveway about 1" higher than the interior slab. Things were getting kinda discouraging. After a very long night shift, and another stint all morning, you might say that I was at the end of my rope.



Pulling with a chain fall anchored to Big Red, the snails and snow frogs were making greater progress. Lots of jacks and jack stands and dunnage and shoving and listening for unexpected screeching sounds. Placement of bunks and rollers and such was all "from on horseback."



Finally I gave Jim a call. Jim is one of those guys to whom I say, "I'm in trouble, and need help" and he says, "I'll be right over." Sweeter words never spoken.

I had snail paced onto the trailer from a couple of ersatz cradles and made it about 50' from the starting line when Jim showed up. Just like hearing that bugle and the cavalry gallops over the hill. Things are gonna be OK.



And so into the daylight for the first time. There's a thousand things that still need doing like another axle and brake replacement, getting the motor on and hooked up and running and actually making it down a ramp and into the water and back out on a home built trailer. Stuff like that.



This has the makings of a great summer voyaging season coming to an anchorage near you.

Mission Creep of Trailer Paleontology

All it was "supposed to take" was the inevitable breaking of several U-bolts, the inevitable galling a few rusty nuts and the inevitable guesswork of fitting a rather unique bottom profile to a veteran trailer frame. Any more just one of the last rites of the Building Season near past. In fact, it was just a year ago, that I was doing this tomfoolery with Mr Tom, *Miss Kathleen's* beast of burden. I was pretty sure just a year ago, I wasn't going to "do that again."



I was pretty sure those things were a thing of my checkered past. Well, now it's Mr Brogans who just may need significant ortho. I spent an entire day jacking and ooching *Walk-about* hither and yon. I got those replacement bunks twisted and shimmed and oched into place. Other than a still inexplicable sine wave developing in the axle, things were progressing about according to plan.

I was even getting with the inevitable tradeoffs among a trio of variables, trailer stability as a function of wheel base, ease of launching and recovering as a function of axle drop and wheel size, enhanced load carrying and resistance to blowouts as a function of tire size.

First off I went down to visit *Miss K* and Mr T out in the wood at the bottom of a hill behind a substantial snow berm across a slippery wooden bridge behind another boat/trailer buried in still snow frog depths and managed to borrow one of Mr T's spare tires from the impoundment. "Borrowing" a second wheel/tire combo would require significant digging and dragging of a heavy floor jack through the snow and then busting those lugs without the advantage of a compressor and pneumatic wrench unless I wanted to drag them down there, too, and, of course, drag them back out, assuming something else didn't go wrong at a difficult point. But Mr T has mondo shoes and just the thing to try out for Mr B. So I dragged that mondo spare out of the snow out in the woods and put it on.

Ohhhhh nooooo... I'm pretty sure we're now too high above the water at the ramp for an easy come 'n go. It would be nice to be able to go give it a try. One of these days I think one of our ramps might just get melted out. But one of the big wingding cool reasons I took on this whole new boat project was to be able to launch and recover and trailer without having to deal with that huge boat on that huge trailer. Well, this wheel/tire combo was likely to push our waistline out to at least 8'6 with a not so small matter of the fenders colliding with the hull. Things were just not working out.

So I went off to visit *Lady Bug* and *Quigley* over at the Slammer. They're still snowed in, too but not as bad as *Miss K*. I took the



compressor and a 100' cord. But I also figured that by the time I got all that stuff hauled and situated, I could just pop a couple of tires off with a breaker bar and helper. So an hour later I'd "borrowed" *Quig's* shoes and replaced them with a couple of loaners that will, of course, have to be replaced before we go anywhere. *Quig's* shoes are smaller than Mr T's by several orders of magnitude. They're set on deeply offset wheels that minimize our side to side stikeeouteness coming down the road. Now "all I hadda do" was go back home and swap out Mr B's rubber. I hadn't figured on getting into this again this year.

We're back to a svelte 8' stance with that setup. Of course, I could only get this degree of offset in the wheel department by scouring a local wheel and tire graveyard for automotive rims that also managed to sport the elusive "five on four and a half" hole spacing. Apparently this deep an offset is largely limited to foreign rigs with differing hole patterns.



Going into this one I was pretty sure I had a 3,500lb capacity axle with a 2" drop set on substantial springs supporting a robust frame. Of course, final inspections were somewhat abridged by a mountain of snow and ice. All this has come to a head because I think I'm going to haul this contraption on a thousand mile round trip to coastal Oregon in

a couple of weeks. That's been the goal, anyway, at least until now.



I'm beginning to think that I'll have to replace another axle and will I have to replace the springs and the mounting trucks while I'm at it? Dunno. It would be nice to be able to test a few of these theories before all that knuckle skinning and U-bolt fracturing. I guess you could say, that's the view from here.



The View From Here

As I walked into the office at our local gravel pit operation to see if the scale would be clear for a few minutes so I could get *Walkabout* and Mr Brogans weighed in, the nice lady was sort of exasperatedly explaining something over the phone to a gravel delivery customer somewhere "out there." "...you'll have to decide how soft it is... but it IS a 60,000lb truck..." I figured, if I continued to look pathetic but not helpless, I wouldn't appear to increase her burdens.



We almost didn't make it that far. The snow berms at the end of our driveway slab are maybe floating on mud but they are about as hard and implacable as that concrete. Sort of a "Three Stooges Build a House" moment as I tried to get *Big Red* and *Walkabout* flung around and over so we could slosh in some of that mud. The view from the top of our little hill was just plain fantastic. This meant that a six month period of fixation, failure, folly and forbearance just might prove out.



No motor, no gas, no Dinty Moore cans but I don't think that boat and trailer will exceed 2,500lbs, about half of what we hauled around, all over the place last summer, about 10,000 miles. That in itself is real encouraging. Likely we have a new axle in our near future but symptoms are only symptoms so far.

Rod offered to make *Walkabout's* cushions, something I was only going to wing it. He brought over a couple of the ensemble for a trial fit. Still about 20° in the shade and I was grumbling about the esoterica of axles and U-bolts. But this was really a bright spot, dontacha think? We just gotta keeping thinking warm thoughts about liquid water. Pretty soon, now...



Spontaneity

A week ago this little scene looked more like something from a Currier & Ives boxtop maybe 2' of snow. Not today. The idea was to "just go look."

Jim dropped in from Montana. I'm not sure if he talked me into going or I talked him into coming but we dragged *Walkabout* over to Idaho just to see how she sat her trailer, Mr Brogans. That, and to check on the snow levels on the ramp. Well. No snow. No jetskis. Not even any fishermen. Nobody lined up. Nobody waiting. "Why don't we just back down and see if she looks like she'll slide off the trailer?" "Yeah. We could do that. As long as we're here and all."

River's low and pretty flat bottomed. Hard to say how this is gonna go. We'll just take a look.



Well, lookeethere, she does seem to be floating OK. I suppose we could just unhook the winch strap and warp her around the corner of the float. We could just sorta, maybe, leave her alongside. There's nobody waiting for the ramp and all.



Well, that went pretty well. I suppose as long as we're here we could just sort of fire up Miss Suzi and see how she does alongside. I doubt there's over a quart of gas in that tank. But we could just run 'er up alongside. We won't go anyplace. Just run 'er up, right here. Yeah, that should be fine.



Hey, maybe if I just sort of push off a bit, could we take a few pictures? I'll just sorta drift here. There's really not enough gas to go anyplace but it would be good to see where she sits in the water.



Hey Jim, I think there may be just enough gas for a short turn for the camera. And I do have a paddle.

Hey, that was pretty good. Maybe one more little bitty loop.



Just maybe it would be a good idea to plan ahead enough to have gas in the tank and sandwiches in the picnic basket. Soon, real soon.

Some Nautical Terms

By Stephen D. (Doc) Regan

The terminology and slang of sailors is confusing, fun, weird and occasionally humorous. While reading the 20 books of Patrick O'Brian series, I was so confounded by the naval terms and jargon that I had to purchase a special book, *Sea of Words*, edited by Dean King, a mere 483 page lexicon in order to comprehend the books. Unfortunately it was only a sample of the nautical vernacular. Over the years I have collected several nautical dictionaries.

ARGOSY: A large merchant vessel usually found in Poland or Venice, or a men's magazine.

CACHEXY: Malnutrition or wasting disease, or a hot looking Czech gal.

JIB OF JIBS: The sixth jib on a bowsprit, or a new jib after the old one blows out.

FLY: The length from staff to the extreme edge of a flying flag, or the Minnesota state bird.

PUDDING: Oakum and cordage that wreaths the bow of a ship to avoid chafing, quite similar to the dessert served with some hot school lunches

DEAD MEN: Also known as Irish pen-nants, a term for loose strings or pieces of cordage, also known for when your mom found out you were out parked with Suzie instead of studying at the library.

LANDSHARK: A derisive term for lawyer about whom there is only one joke, the rest are all true.

LEATHERNECK: A piece of leather surrounding a Marine's neck to protect him from sword thrusts, or the neck of a sailor who has been at sea too long.

NIP CHEESE: An expression describing the purser's propensity to keep some of the supplies for his own use to sell, or the kind of cheese used in school hot lunch programs with stale macaroni.

NANTUCKET JOY RIDE: An enlightening term that accurately describes the ride in a whaleboat after harpooning a whale, or spoiled New England rich kids racing their Corvettes.

JACKKNIFE: A hinge bladed knife used by officers while crew used a sheath knife, or it is what my brother did with his truck. In the '50s, every boy carried a jack-knife. Today a child will automatically be expelled for carrying a jackknife.

LASSIE: A body found on the beach and believed dead until a sailor's dog kept whining over the body that was found to be still alive. The sailor was John Lassie and so is every longhaired collie in the universe.

SALARY: Sailors were paid for their services in part with salt. Salary is a word from the Latin "salaum" meaning "salt." The phrase "worth his salt" means that the sailor is doing a good job. Evidently I was not worth much to my captains either in money or salt.

SCUTTLEBUTT: A wooden water cask placed on deck from which sailors could drink, or my pug dragging his butt on the carpet.

SHANTY: Songs used by sailors during arduous tasks like weighing anchor, or a tarpaper shack in which we Shanty Irish lived unlike the Lace Curtain Irish who lived in real houses.

It has occurred to me recently that *Dancing Chicken* may end up having to be either a folding dinghy or a sectional dinghy. If so, and if I opt for just sectional, it might be only temporary because the concept of a folding sectional dinghy might still be too intriguing to ignore indefinitely.

But for one thing, I really would like to see *Dancing Chicken* in the water this year, and if I try to include both of those elements, well, it's not impossible, of course, because ultimately nothing is, right? But by the end of this summer? HMMMMMMMM. I also realize that I might just be feeling the pressure of the fact that as I write this it is late March, which will technically be "spring." Granted, there's also summer which might work. As I've probably mentioned before, August is my favorite month. That's the month in which I launched my *Talitha Cumi*.

Possibly contributing to these thoughts and feelings is the factor that this winter has been, well, interesting. Back in Part XVI I mentioned the "door well," which is the depression in the trail leading from the front to the back of the camper. The reason the depression is there is because I have to dig the snow out from in front of the door so that it will open. After a couple or so snowstorms, walking from the front to the back of the camper entails walking a few feet, stepping down into the "door well," walking another two or three feet and then stepping up again onto the trail.

While thinking about various strategies for dealing with this, I remembered that there is a smaller door that is set into the larger door. This smaller door had been sealed with little metallic fasteners and some sort of rubberized sealer for years. It had occurred to me that if I could get it to open, since the bottom of the small door is several inches higher than the big door, it might lessen the chances of being unexpectedly trapped inside the camper if the snowfall somehow got ahead of my intermittent "door dig" procedure one of those snowy nights. Right before that next to last snowstorm I finally succeeded in doing that.

But the door doesn't seem to like it that I did that because now the top hinge is allowing the door to take leave of the side of the camper, putting the door at a decidedly disadvantageous angle which it must be convinced to modify in order to close the door. To ameliorate this I plan to improvise something to keep the door from totally falling off, and then later this spring I was thinking about building a new door, one that would open inward. Then again, if I can get the door that's on there already working reasonably well, along with the factor of having the smaller door now usable, that will probably do for the time being while I get back to work on *Dancing Chicken*.

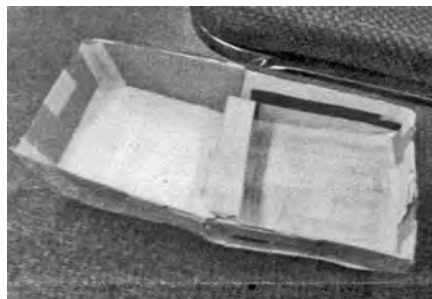
Actually, I can see that the various test modules, including the "three dimensional rough sketches" I've done so far, all show a good possibility of being workable, so it's partly from them that I'm attempting to develop information on how to proceed next. For quick reference, here are a couple of photos from Part XXIII of the "three dimensional rough sketch" I made of *Dancing Chicken* with both halves attached to each other.

Dancing Chicken

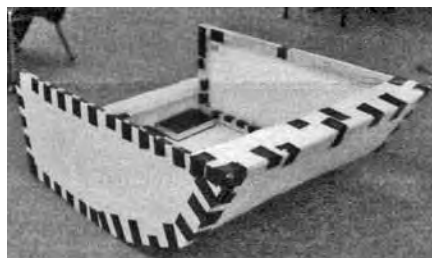
A MiniSaga in (?) Parts

Part XXV

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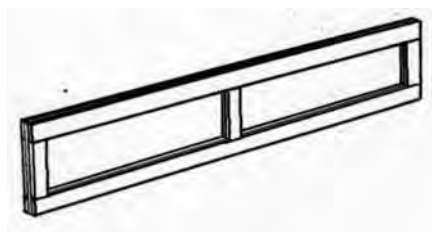


And here's that full size "three dimensional rough sketch" (photo from Part XXIV below) of the forward folding section.



However, one thing I'm asking myself is, "If I continue on with this design as is (and postulating that I will indeed come up with a satisfactory joining scheme that will keep her safely intact while underway), will she ever be more than a pool toy? I want her to be a cruising dinghy. Granted, with the two halves as designed she's somewhat limited as to length, but a third section could be the answer to that. I think that I recall reading that Ken Simpson (<http://65.110.86.132/plans/simpson/index.htm>) has used a third section to advantage for that purpose.

Meanwhile I do have a design for the bow member transom, and I guess you could call them mini transoms, that go at the juncture point. Here's a rough Microsoft Paint sketch of the basic design which I think could be used for all of those. I think the only difference would be the dimensions.



Just as an aside, as I was looking at this sketch and it occurred to me that it probably illustrates the layering scheme better than any I've submitted so far. I've probably mentioned that one of the advantages of this method is that I can end up with a frame that's essentially as though I had jigsawed the entire frame from one piece of inch and a quarter solid spruce. It's easier, I think, to see from this sketch how the pieces of lath go together to allow that to happen.

Of course, glue would increase the strength and rigidity, etc. The main reason I haven't used any adhesive up until now is because of the possibilities for modifications that I still have until I do decide to do that.

"When will I do that?" Probably sort of "last." I may do the first in the water tests with just a good coat of paint on the frames. I want to keep that mutability factor. I have found that layering battens such as this by attaching them with sheet rock screws yields an amazingly strong scantling, so for the time being it will probably work as is, at least for the purposes of testing.

One reason why I say "I think" the only difference would be the dimensions is because I want to actually have at least one or two of those hopefully multi purpose (transom, bow member, mini transom) modules constructed so I can twiddle around with them and with the frames I'm working on. Getting hands on, I've found, is where one says, "Oh, aha!" Or, admittedly, sometimes, "Oh, oops!"

So what will emerge from the above mentioned twiggling? Is the question "to fold or not to fold?" re emerging or is it merely, "will she fold now or later?" Or will something else emerge something that at this point I haven't yet visualized? We shall see.



Ken Simpson Boat Design

Welcome to Portable Boat Plans of Arizona. All of the Portable Boat Designs Require No Trailer for Transport!

Ken Simpson is a retired Mechanical Engineer who was lucky enough in his early career to have worked on the Inertial Navigation System for the Apollo Spacecraft. During this exciting time, Ken found time to design and build people carrying vehicles of an unusual kind.

Today, retired, he takes great pleasure in designing small, portable, easy to build, affordable boats. Surprisingly, there are a few good lakes near his home (it is the desert, after all) and they have become a testing ground for these creations. Not content with yesterday's designs, and always looking out for new and different methods of construction, Ken continues to seek the boat design that will satisfy the most people. Not an easy objective, but one that should keep him busy for many more years, and designs, to come.

Learning to Love Lofting... or, The Joy of Boatbuilding from Scratch

Reprinted from *Dinghy Cruising*, Journal of the Dinghy Cruising Association, UK

by Bill Haylock

THE OGA DINGHY (DC237 and 238) is a laudable project, although the concept seems to be a racing one-design approach rather than creating an ideal cruising dinghy.

I'd like to encourage aspirant boatbuilders (particularly those, like me, on a limited budget) to consider the option of building a boat from plans, rather than from a kit. It is considerably cheaper and opens up a huge choice of designs to choose from. And, as I have found, it can make the build a much more rewarding and enjoyable activity in itself.

I'm in the process of building a 16ft Apple lug yawl off plans I bought from the designer, Tom Dunderdale (of *Campion Sail and Design* – <http://www.campionboats.co.uk/details.html>) – for £73. Although involving more thought, head-scratching and hours of work than building from a kit of parts cut by a computer, I discovered that lofting the traditional way, by hand and by brain, is a very rewarding activity.

Lofting is the process of drawing, at full scale onto sheets of plywood, the crucial curves for the planks, or strakes, that will create the 3D shape of your chosen boat. Early on in my pre-build research I discovered a documentary film of the Tyneside shipyards, where skilled workers plotted chalk lines onto huge sheets of steel, to be cut by oxy-acetylene torches and riveted into ocean-going liners. The process is the same in principle for building a dinghy. At first sight, it's a daunting job – but anyone who has drawn a graph in school maths lessons can loft a curve.

Before you start you need a flat, level area to work on. My shed floor was uneven, so I built a platform of OSB board on 2 x 4 timbers, mounted on large castors, so it could be moved around. The

first stage of the build was joining two 8x4 sheets of marine ply, using the same glass-and-epoxy-reinforced butt joint as described in the OGA dinghy-build article. Tom's excellent building notes that came with the Apple plans give a table of offsets – think of them as the x and y co-ordinates for points on the curve of a graph. Two points are measured vertically from the base line, and horizontally from the left hand end of the plywood, to define both edges of the strake. Having plotted and marked all the points with pencil crosses, I then re-measured them several times to convince myself they were all correct. It's then just a matter of drawing pencil lines through the crosses, using a thin, flexible wooden lath temporarily held in place with panel pins... just like drawing a graph.

I chose Tom's Apple design for a number of reasons. I liked its traditional looks, with vertical stem, multi-chine hull and sloping, tumblehome transom. I liked the sail plan because I'm keen on balance lug sails and mizzens. I liked the option of building in water ballast. And I liked the fact that the underwater shape makes it a fast, planing hull. The final selling point was that through clever nesting of the strakes, Tom had created a 16ft hull out of only 4 sheets of marine plywood. The downside of the clever nesting was that it demanded different base lines, at different angles, for plotting the curves of each strake – hence extra headscratching and careful re-measuring of every point before making the first cut with the jig saw.

Erring on the side of caution, I kept the jig saw well away from the lines marking the edges of the strakes. This meant two or three solid days of planing down to the line with a block plane.

There was a hiatus when I realised that the cheap block plane I had bought wasn't up to the job and kept going blunt. I had to wait for the delivery of a Record block plane. This proved to be one of the two most important tools for the project. So far, so boring – but the next stage of the build was where all that tedious and careful measuring, marking, cutting and planing seemed worthwhile.

Like the OGA dinghy, the Apple uses the stitch-and-tape building technique. This was originally developed by woodwork teacher Ken Littledyke who designed self-build kits for plywood kayaks under the 'Kayel' brand name, which were manufactured by Granta Boats in Cambridgeshire. It was popularised, however, by the original television DIY guru, Barry Bucknell, with Jack Holt, in the *Mirror* dinghy design of the early 1960s. The *Mirror* concept was all about making sailing accessible to the masses. The stitch-and-tape technique made it possible to build your own boat without specialist tools or skills and for much less money than a ready-made boat. This ethos was important for me. As a pensioner on a modest income my budget is tight and I don't have a fancy workshop with sophisticated tools.

Tom Dunderdale's design follows the original concept of stitch-and-tape because, unlike the OGA design, the Apple doesn't require the use of a building jig. Starting with the garboard strakes, stitched together with copper wire and opened out like a book, the subsequent strakes are then stitched on with cable ties, and the midships and bow bulkheads stitched in after the third strake. The strakes just need to be supported with wooden chocks at strategic points to ensure the hull is straight and true.

In just a couple of days those funny-shaped and unwieldy plywood planks took on the recognisable shape of a boat as you can see in the sequence of photographs. It seemed almost magical! What's more, the strakes all fitted together neatly – no yawning gaps anywhere. Tom's construction notes had stressed the importance of measuring and cutting the strakes to millimetre-perfect precision. I felt very proud of my new-found lofting skills and my workmanship!

The internal seams have been double-taped and epoxied, the centreboard case is in, and the entire outside of the hull has been sheathed in light glass cloth and epoxy, rather than just taped, as I wanted a smooth finish so I can varnish the topsides rather than paint the whole hull. I've still to build in the water ballast tanks in the floor, the buoyancy chambers and the thwarts, and the fore and aft decks. I've got centreboard and rudder, masts and spars to make. Plenty to keep me busy over the winter if I want to achieve my target of launching her next spring.

Her name is already chosen. *Soirbheas* (pronounced 'sirruvus')

is a Scottish Gaelic word meaning 'a fair breeze' and also 'prosperity' or 'success' – a wish or blessing for someone going on a journey, which in the Gaeltacht would almost always have been by boat.

Building from scratch has saved me a lot of money, as well as being fun. So far it has cost me just over £1500 and that includes the sails and all the hardware I need. I've saved money on 'yacht tax' by avoiding the usual chandlery sources where possible – buying 2-part Jotun epoxy paint from an industrial supplier at £42 for 5 litres, for example, and sourcing literally dirt-cheap iroko for the gunwales from a pile of miscellaneous filthy, rough-sawn hardwood at a scuzzy plant nursery in an unlovely part of County Durham via an ebay advert. The marine ply, which has BS1008 and FSC certification, came from a general timber merchants in South Shields, where they let me go into the warehouse and select my own sheets. It's far-Eastern meranti and proved to be sound while working it and is much cheaper than that from specialist suppliers.

You don't need to be a highly skilled woodworker. I failed my

GCE O-level woodwork exam! I have had quite a bit of practice since then on DIY building projects, however.

With stitch-and-tape you can get by with surprisingly few sophisticated tools, as long as you are prepared to spend time on lots of planing to size. The two items I would say are absolute essentials are a decent block plane and a beefy random orbital sander. I got a hefty Sealey sander/polisher for just under £90 and it's worth every penny because you spend a lot of time sanding. And you'll need as many cramps as you can afford or get your hands on.

The build has gone on for a year now because I keep getting taken away from it by other commitments. I'm beginning to resent the other commitments that keep me away from the boat! Before I started the build, my motivation was mostly the anticipation of sailing the finished boat. But I have come to realise that much of the enjoyment and fulfilment is in the actual building. It has been much more fun and more engrossing than I ever imagined. I think I will be sad when it's done and all I have to do is sail! WH



Photo 1: Planing the strakes to the line. The port and starboard strakes are clamped together to ensure they are perfect mirror images of each other



Photo 2: The first two strakes on each side are stitched together, with two simple formers to keep them open. The garboard strakes are the hardest to close at the bow as they have to twist through almost 90 degrees. I poured boiling water over the forward end of the garboard strakes to soften the plywood and pulled them together at the bow with a bolt and penny washers through both strakes.

Photo 3: (below) The third strake is on, ready for the transom and the bow and midships bulkheads to be stitched in.



Photo 4: (below) And now the fourth (and widest) strake is on. It is split for about the first metre, to create tumblehome in the quarters. Suddenly, she has become a graceful boat!



Photo 5: (above) The first outwale is on and the boat now feels much more rigid.

Photograph bottom left (© Tom Dunderdale):

A completed Apple 16 with the rig as designed. Builders have introduced a variety of sailplans, and Peter Lord's Apple 16 *Vips* (sailed by the Editor with Peter in the Baltic) has carbon fibre masts and more complex lugsails – it's a versatile design.

Photo 6: (below) The second outwale going on. The bow section has been epoxied, but the scarph still has to be cut in the aft end before the final section is pieced in. Once the inwales were in place the boat felt very robust.



Our study came to utilize only the original sailplan of Micro and the ballast keel in their original format geometry. With four full length (6'6") bunks and clearly no room for any cabin in this open layout, the hull shape had to be altered. To get this generous unobstructed cockpit layout a bow transom was necessary, well raked forward and veed in plan view to keep any spray down and away, an option well used in pleasure and workboats both smaller and larger. Adequate storage under the bunks was created for personal storage along with ship's gear, tools, provisions and safety gadgets.

To further open the cockpit, a raked topside was introduced that will make laminating a fine uniformly thick flotation belt of closed cell foam much easier and leaning back under sail more natural. Locating additional foam volumes in either end has yet to be determined, all depending upon how much the structure's natural buoyancy actually will add up to, offsetting the lead keel, the outboard and a good sized battery to power basics like LED nav and utility lights, cell phone chargers, VHF radio, stereo.

By keeping the outboard on centerline the motor can, in serious conditions under reefs or bare poles, reliably supply progress on either tack without much risk of pitching the propeller out.

Flanking the motor are two solid balanced rudders, hung off plain eyebolts and pins, with steps up their trailing edges, both blades cross linked to the centerline tiller that still clears the off center mizzenmast. Those two balanced blades will offer authority for novices to learn how to sail under both sails while the original underslung rudder might have proved under effective when not coordinated with the mizzen sheet settings. Fooling around in tidal waters with mud and sand and also granite features underwater, a tidal current making her drift in and over things to damage one of them will not immediately be a serious problem.

For sleeping under shelter, the mainmast is simply unlocked out of its slot near the bow and lowered by walking aft in the boat or passing it through various hands to then rest on a shoulder to port of the mizzenmast or in its own crutch, with the bow end in its own crutch stuck into that mast slot. I find it no challenge to lift and carry that 23' long mast by myself, no problem with more hands typically aboard, or letting one of its ends rest as it is placed into position up or down.

A well tailored tarp/canvas tied down to hooks under the rub rail, tied shut at the bow with the end at the transom open for ventilation but with fly screening should allow riding out a wet cold front at anchor, several days of fog and rain. Both ends open and the cover stiffened laterally with battens will offer sun shelter during a relentless hot spell with someone no doubt trying to sail with that sunshade suspended below the mainsail hard points.

Provisions to set up legs to keep her reasonably level once the tide has run out at whatever the hour will prevent an otherwise surprise roll out of a bunk. If they are not set up right, she'll still plop over, giving a rude awakening.

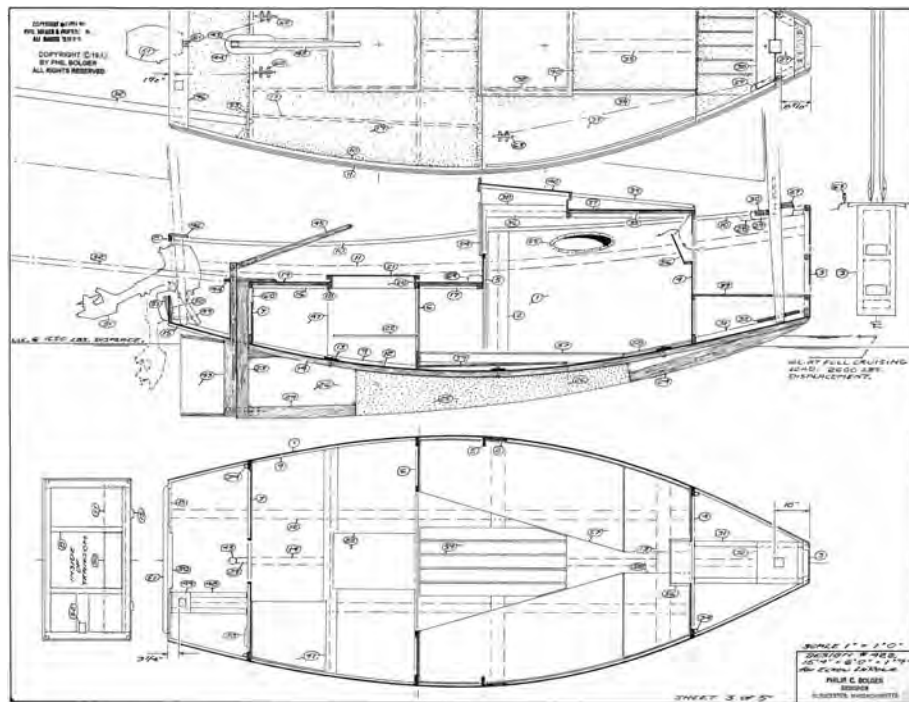
On her foredeck on one side of her mainmast shed carry an oversized Danforth, or whatever anchor type the bottom would need in the waters to be used. On the other side of that foredeck around the mast is a fine spot for a lookout to sit facing forward,

legs dangling, feet dipping periodically into the oncoming waves, one of the best positions aboard, both responsible and rare kind of fun.

Her stern platform offers enough area for a single or two burner gas cooker to splatter around fat, boil over rice, spill canned soup and offer fine smells, the promise even of baked goodies, hot cocoa morning, noon, night and midnight. She'd have a lip at the lower forward end to capture and drain over the side any mistakes or the guts of a freshly caught fish. Lots of ingenuities can be pur-

sued towards the most useful galley aboard.

Overall a reasonably doable design, not a lot of pieces, just enough for everyone to do their share to take ownership in the boat, the hull exactly two ply sheets long, plus the rudders and stern platform to protect them in tight quarters, not a really intimidating project and fortuitously already with ballast keel and spars on hand. Having done that 39 footer, discussed at great length here in *MAIB*, this one seemed both very worthy but not potentially overwhelming even for these intended novices.



Micro Interior

Micro



I sure had a good time just thinking about all that could be done with her. Phil had grown up amongst these salt marshes, he was out there at the age of seven in 1935 by himself, sailing a small catboat his ten year older brother had built from scratch, learning about winds, tides, soft shores and granite boulders, things to barely get away with and dashes of glory when the magic of this place really hits home.

Today, with aerial photography of these waters readily available, perhaps some of the mystery may have gone about how far up that tidal creek really winds until it matches the beam of the boat, but it may inspire eagerness to explore places not yet noticed before but now made known. All this before coming to the openings to Essex Bay, Plum Island Sound, the Merrimack River, etc.

For anyone so concerned there is almost an obligation to share all this experience with youth viewing their world too much on two dimensional stuff on some screen when they could study and feel this all in 3D, along with greenhead and skeeter bites. This experience would make an imprint in their memories and their hearts that would draw them back again and again. So many angles for each of those heads in the crew. Whether stimulating art or stirring feelings for science or just being away for a bit, the boat could be used for over three seasons each year, in the right hands never to linger unattended for too many days.

I even looked at building her out of pressure treated ply and lumber to bolt and screw her together using silicone, etc, for joint sealant just to save the cost of using marine grade ply, epoxy, fiberglass, even paint. Weathered PT wood can have its own charm. Unfortunately, while we older folks may give a damn enough and wear gloves working the stuff and would never lick or chew on it, younger growing souls might not benefit from the active ingredients in CCA drenched materials (as in Chromate Copper Arsenate) that seems the most rot resistant, but also the least desirable for Explorers to sit on and lean against.

So I had figured a clean non toxic marine grade ply interior with the rest of the hull out of the cheaper rougher stuff, kept natural or stained. Ultimately parents reading what CCA meant would not recommend the PT approach as a really good idea around their kids.

My PT thinking was triggered by the preliminary budget to do one Light Schooner, suggesting robust cost cutting, a good periodic exercise anyway to look for excess to be trimmed. But we were actually running a lean

construction budget already, with this early in our discussions happy to have a donated outboard and a reasonably matching trailer on hand already.

Why the head scratching then? This had started out interesting enough with the possibility to see a Light Schooner emerge here in Fishing Schooner Gloucester, or the Trash Cat becoming known for sensible kids doing good eco deeds or something sciencey, or finally even Ship 5 as a rather intriguing study in lots of open cockpit on a minimalist hull footprint, still big enough to sleep four not minding roughing it.

However, after 18 months of our offering input and services pro bono, no fund raising towards building a Bolger design in Bolger's homeport had been done, no building space had been located and no reality checked potential building crew members had been found. In fact, no interest in studying even the simplest *Payson's Instant Boats* building approach which Harold H. Payson had developed across decades of productive collaboration with Phil had been displayed.

I was not advised on the limited (five minute) attention span kids presumably have nowadays, while their parents were not invited to view a slideshow on how we did that 39 footer and boat building manuals and books. This displayed to me a mindset, that was more or less the opposite of what I've always understood the ethos of the Sea Explorers to be.

None of these adults seemed prepared to carry even such a modest project to a reasonable outcome. One of them breezily suggested that they'll learn as they go along, true no doubt in so many ways, except that the kids will learn little of their adults' unwillingness to seriously prepare for a project that is supposed to take their kids not just into waters with up to 12.5' of tidal changes, but also eventually here and there along the New England shoreline of the Atlantic Ocean.

All this became obvious before a background of talking about tight schedule, planning grand announcements in social media of things to come and fabulous ambitions to set a national example amongst the Sea Explorers, videos, books and all, all without any of the basics in place. All of their visions would have been doable only with the basics in place, such as a budget, upfront learning, prepping the skill sets, figuring a building shed, attracting and sorting through would be collaborators to find the actual like minded ones, all under a spirit of reasonable focus on

the essentials necessary. So it may not have been the kids that had that attention deficit thing going.

I finally had too much of that self indulgence so I penned a summary of my perspective on these proceedings, sent it off to them and abruptly pulled out of that growing mania. I'd rather not have Phil's name or myself associated with this weird spectacle in our own homeport. I have my own self indulgences to tend!

Imagine that level of odd misfirings on an actual project, multiple versions of these emotions on the shop floor at the same time, sharp tools in hand, epoxy clock running, steep learning curve even with good prep, tightest budget not allowing costly mistakes, kids watching adults doing poorly, emotions building in the wrong direction.

What started intriguing enough was thus messed up by adults. Their kids will go on into their futures without the experience of building, launching and learning to increasingly use the Ship in ways anticipated and unexpected, across seasons and in different waters, riding the trailer behind the minivan full of the crew. Instead, they may be enrolled in some summer camp to get them out of the hair of their elders.

Another indication of a low point in maritime culture hereabouts by 2019? Not sure. Certainly lots of confusion in some quarters but also lots of stout daily focus on ocean centric and marine industrial work, careers, jobs and taxbase including here at PB&F.

So when on something this worthwhile, this character shaping and as endlessly inviting as building and then using locally and on voyages their own Sea Explorers' Ship does not attract the necessary focus by the involved adults, then they may seem to me more spacey than their kids were suggested as being.

But since PB&F does not run a therapy camp for such adults, it's good to have unambiguously stepped away from this mindset to now enjoy this study with its background of our having been willing to go along this far towards getting that Ship built and used.

Instead of burning more energy on these people, there is more productive work to be done such as even at long last answering some prison correspondence sent by folks who may remain sane by thinking about, and indeed planning for, that boat project once out. There should be *MAIB* subscriptions in a lot of penal institutions.

With this study now on the cork wall, we can see evolve various Micro-1 and -2 related rigs on her, eventually cat or sloop rigs, then a two some cabin, perhaps a touch of Dutch styling and color scheming for a quaint set of visuals quite different than the original Micro on the same keel and rig. Perhaps we may lose that lead keel altogether along with its draft in one version, put that weight inside her hull, add leeboards for the now 1' draft cruiser fit even for Dutch waters, or just a fine image painted and fired on a Delft-tile, twin-rudders, outboard and all.

Of course, with greater focus demonstrated by other parents and a different leadership, a Ship may yet be built, in fact, conceivably without any affiliation with this particular organization. After all, neither Phil nor I ever needed any group to taste and live sailing the marsh and alongshore in our lives. By now, well into another spring, mighty 8'x4'x 59sf. Flying Cloud has been on her mooring for a bit already.

Our racy and dramatic Design #395, Light Schooner, was on the table but...



25 Years Ago
in **MAIB**



Return of the "Time Machine"

By Rich Alves

Now here is an ideal watercraft that I designed and built for easy daysailing or weekend couple camping onboard in comfort.

Being flat bottomed it's extremely stable at anchor or underway regardless of waves or wakes. Its so stable one can stand up and walk stem to stern underway and it doesn't heel but just slices forward.

Being designed to be out in scorching sun or torrential rain it's equipped with an optional sun tarp and underway rain fly which rolls down further to join full screening for camping.

Roof toppable, interlocking and stacked, devoid of motor, trailer and registration, it requires for arrival at water's edge to underway but ten minutes by myself.

"A ship within a ship" as described in the book "The Time Machine", it is a blend of traditional beauty and modern sleekness, displaying mostly brightwork of 1/4" Maylaysian lauan mahogany and oak trim.

The center pod provides the luxury of a fully unobstructed 4'x8' deck for cooking, dining, dancing, lounging and sleeping for two. A line and pulley system all around the inside makes steering the balanced rudders easy from virtually anywhere onboard without having to reach out for a tiller or a wheel.

The 75sf (max) sail is fully roller reefed around the boom, from lug to lateen underway, with ease and safety by one person in seconds. The arched hoop traveller keeps the center pod completely clear and safe from the sheet and also supports the tarps and tent. And there's no ducking the boom.

All construction was done at home using epoxy, glass fabric, common lumber, hardware and marine supply store goods.

Rich Alves, 168 Lohse Rd.
Willington, CT 06279.



Does your smartphone (cellphone, etc) have a camera function as well as a flashlight function? If so, you have a handy tool when working on a boat engine or a wiring problem. The flashlight function will provide a bright source of light that can be directed to where light is needed with little problem. The camera function will take a picture of the item (area) in question that can be expanded for better detail. With these two functions you can get a good look at the work area (or project item) and see where everything is located before you start taking things apart.

Not having such a device, I have carefully drawn pictures of what was going on and labeled all the wiring that might be affected by the work being done before I started. I would also try to take pictures with my digital camera (focus and shadow problems) and I might still end up with problems putting everything back. If I was still working on boat engines and wiring systems, a smartphone with a camera would be a good investment. I might even make phone calls using it.

Electronic navigation is quite useful as long as the signals to the GPS are accurate and the software is current. The problems can come from interference from without or within the boat. It seems that some LED lighting systems affect unshielded electronics and your boat should be tested to see if that is the case. There are a number of articles in boating magazines on the subject and how to test for the potential problem if you have LED on your boat.

Other factors can affect your electronic positioning system such as the continental drift that is affecting Australia and electronic navigation in the area. The Australian continent is drifting to the northeast. By 2020 Australia will have moved by about 5' since 1994. This is taking features marked on maps out of line with the global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) such as GPS.

A non electronic factor that might be of consideration is the drifting of the magnetic north pole to the northwest at about 34 miles a year. Paper charts show this drift as changes in the variation of the compass read-



ing. If your electronic positioning system does not allow for this change in variation, your course may be a little off. Oh yes, true north varies a bit because of the earth's wobble in rotation over time.

The use of a tabernacle to help lower the sailboat's mast is very handy but still takes a lot of effort. One person with a Chebacco catboat (designed by Bolger) put about 20 pounds of lead in the base of the mast to counterbalance the weight of the upper part of the mast. The owner says it works quite well. If interested, the information is in Chebacco News #57 (www.chebacco.com/chebacco-news). He got the idea after reading about yachts and barges on the Norfolk Broads shooting bridges, getting the mast down (mainsail still up), getting under the bridge and then getting underway again in a few minutes.

Does your powerboat have trim tabs? Since most trim tabs are set up to operate independently, have you ever tried steering with them? There are a number of techniques for steering a boat if the rudder fails but I have not seen much on using the trim tabs. You might want to give it a try on a calm day at a low speed.

Few people have radio direction finders on their boat these days. The device is quite useful for navigating or finding another boat. If the direction finder had the proper frequencies you could set the device to the frequency being used and home in on the other boat. Using a set of frequencies you could find your probable location on the water.

We were sailing a boat to St Petersburg (Florida) in a fog. We had a radio direction

finder on board and used it to locate a bearing for the beacon on Egmont Key. Since the Anchote Key beacon was not working, the second bearing was on the aircraft beacon at the St Petersburg airport. Since the signal was coming over land, it was somewhat distorted but it was what we had available. The two bearings gave us a probable position in the fog which gave us a course for the entrance we wanted. All worked out quite nicely, when we came out of the fog the entrance buoy for the channel we wanted was visible in front of us.

Another aid to navigation that can be used in certain locations is the flight of commercial aircraft following one of the airways. One of our local race courses took us out to Buoy 24. We headed southward from the St Marks River entrance buoy for that mark. If we were at the right place at the right time we could see the commercial flights from Tallahassee to Tampa pass overhead. The airway the pilot was flying passed right over Buoy 24. Thus, by looking at the plane's direction of flight we would know how accurate our course was for Buoy 24. According to an account of a trip from Europe to North America, the sailors used the great circle route contrails from the commercial jets high above to plot their course.

While we can learn from our mistakes, it is better to learn from others' mistakes. That is why I read every "question and answer" section of each boating publication I receive. Granted, some of the material does not meet my needs but the information is still interesting and may be useful someday.

Fog Investigation and Dispersal Operation (FIDO) was a system used for dispersing fog from an airfield so that aircraft could land safely. The device was developed by Arthur Hartley for British RAF bomber stations, allowing the landing of aircraft returning from raids over Germany in poor visibility by burning fuel in rows on either side of the runway. When I first read about the concept I was thinking about a way to provide a clear channel into a harbor. But burning a lot of fuel to provide visibility does not seem practical these days.



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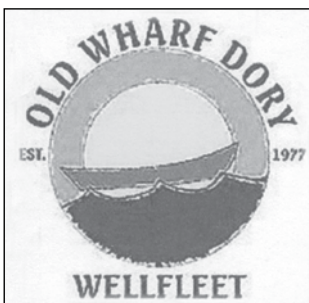
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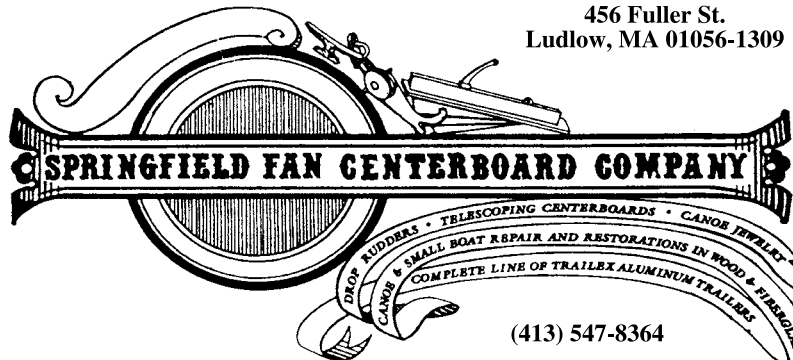
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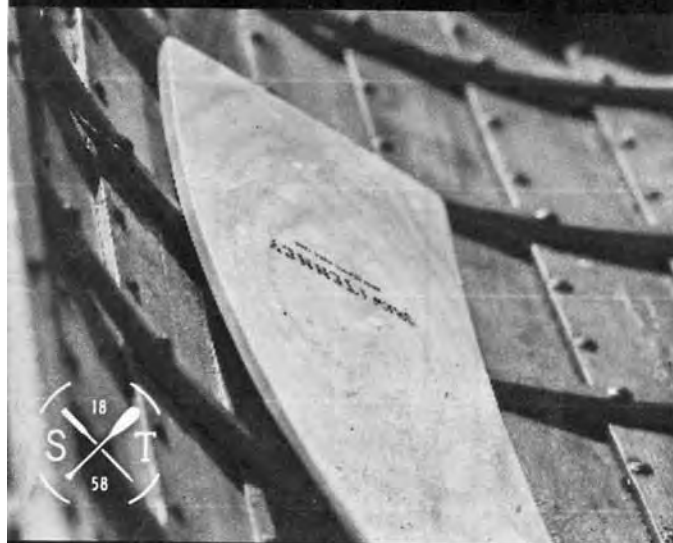
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If you are a savvy boat person, (and why would you be reading Messing About if you weren't a boat savvy person?) you would know that this photo asks more questions than it answers. It was taken in early August, right in the middle of hurricane season. There was a gale scheduled to arrive the next day. We were on Martha's Vineyard. Small craft warnings had been posted. Public beaches had been closed, red flags were flying.

Sensible people were removing their boats from the water, or at least making sure their mooring lines were tight and their bumpers were secure. We, on the other hand, were making our way towards the water. It was a week-long family vacation. Some were coming up from Jersey, some from Connecticut and I brought a pair of boats down with me, a Vermont Pack Boat and a Vermont Fishing Dory, one 12' long and 40 lbs, the other 14' long and 80 lbs, they have very different carrying capacities. Simon, my nephew, and his lady-friend had to do a "wet entry." In English, they had to swim out to the boat, the surf was pounding the shore too hard. Emily hung her weight on one side of the boat and Simon rolled in on the other side. Then he returned the favor.

Once settled, the wind and waves provided no issue to the boat. When they were ready to return, the process was reversed, a wet dismount.

